

THE BRONX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES FUTURE LEADERS MIGRATING:  
CREATING A PROCESS THAT ENGAGES THE YOUNG ADULTS

By

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A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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## ABSTRACT

### THE BRONX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES FUTURE LEADERS MIGRATING: CREATING A PROCESS THAT ENGAGES THE YOUNG ADULTS

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As an Associate Minister of the Sound View Presbyterian Church, Bronx, New York, it was my observation of the young adults' of the church, that caused me to initiate this demonstration project and investigate the cause(s) of the drastic reduction in young adults' (ages 18-19 years) membership in the church. In 2008, during my internship in the church, there were more young people, but in 2009, I noticed a drastic decrease in attendance in this age group.

"I realize that there is a pressing need to improve [young adults', 18-19] presence and participation"<sup>1</sup> in the Bronx Presbyterian Churches. Therefore, I decided to determine the possible causes and solution. As part of my research, I discovered that a trend within young adults' experiences, like in other life stages, is a struggle for identity. "My literacy research centered on some historical and present day [researches] that might influence the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"<sup>2</sup> young adults to remain in the BPC and bring back those who had already left. During my interview, some youth indicated that the church is adult-oriented; old fashioned; that the church is not a model for young people; and that the church is not loving and caring. My research also led me to look at some young people's life patterns, such as quests for freedom and the rejection of parental values.

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin D. Redmond, Sr., *A Demonstration Project: Reaching African-American Males Ages 16-24* (Freeport, New York: New York Theological Seminary, 2009), Abstract.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## DEDICATION

To my wife, Deaconess Blessing Dupe Etsekhume, whose motivation and wisdom inspired me, even when I was about giving up hope due to sickness, and my children, Precious and Samuel, whose dedication as young people has taught me how to deal with other young adults.

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I also want to thank my advisor, Dr. Nancy Fields, who took time out of her tight schedule to attend to me and see that my vision of completing this project come to pass. I cannot fail to thank Dr. Clementine Foy, the chairperson of the Sound View Presbyterian Church Christian Education Committee, for giving me her Ph.D. Program thesis to peruse for this demonstration project and whose encouragement inspired me. I also thank Ms. LaVerne Ramsey for granting me an interview about young adults' in SVPC, Kadeem Marulaz, the President of SVPC Youth Ministry, for assisting me in organizing things during this project, and SVPC Youth Ministry Assistant Coordinator, Ms. Phyllis Copeland, and members of the Youth Ministry. Dan and Suzie Wards cannot be left out of my appreciation for they donated some Canon Cameras to me during my project.

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## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

### **My Personal Observation**

But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” After he took the children in his arms, he placed his hands on them and blessed them (Mark 10:14-16, NetB).

### **How Can They Just Leave Like That?**

How can they leave just like that? First, it was Mike, German, and then Kisha followed and now it is Nayema and Regina. These were the youth leaders in Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) Youth Ministry. As Associate Minister in SVPC, and a “closed observer of most”<sup>3</sup> of the Bronx Presbyterian churches, I notice the limited numbers of young adults aged 18-19 in the Bronx Presbyterian churches. Although, I have read books about young adults abandoning the church, I never expected it to happen right in my face. There are mountains of reasons and factors for this occurrence as to why young adults are leaving the church, specifically, my church. The young people are the leaders not only of tomorrow, but of today.

Young adult migration is a common problem within the over 17 Presbyterian Churches in the Bronx; (The First of Throggs Neck PC., E-Tremont Ave., Fourth PC.,

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<sup>3</sup> Redmond Sr., Kelvin D. *Reaching African-American Males Ages 16-24 in A Demonstration Project* (New York, NY: New York Theological Ministry, 2009), 1.

Newbold Ave., Laconia Community PC., Laconia Ave., Bedford Park PC., Bainbridge Ave., Sound View PC., Soundview Ave., El Buen Pastor-Mid Bronx PC., Grand Concourse, Fort Schuyler PC., Dewey Ave., St. Augustine PC., E 165<sup>th</sup> St. San Andres PC., Sound View Ave., Eastern Korean PC., Newbold Ave., University Heights PC., University Ave., Featherbed Lane PC., Featherbed Lane Ave., Riverdale PC., Henry Hudson Pkwy, Beck Memorial PC., E 180<sup>th</sup> St. First William-Bridge PC., E 225<sup>th</sup> St., and the Eastchester PC., on Fish Ave).<sup>4</sup> (See Appendix E for BPCs 10 year trend).

Determining how to curb young migration so that it does not stifle the affected churches is the focus of this Demonstration Project, with SVPC as the center of my research. The feasibility in the proliferation in young adult migration from SVPC has already resulted in a great decline in membership, because the absences of young adults count.

My observations of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) 18-19 year olds during church services, lead me to visit other Bronx Presbyterian Churches; Featherbed Lane Presbyterian Church, the University Height Presbyterian Church and the Eastchester Presbyterian Church to name a few. These trips were on different days in hopes to observe young adult performance during Sunday services. The outcome was very disappointing. I thought the other Bronx Presbyterian Churches (abbreviated BPCs) would have more young adults than Sound View Presbyterian Church (abbreviated (SVPC), but they do not. SVPC turned out to have more young people than some of the other BPCs. Young people were not in service during my visits to the other churches. During my attendance at the annual Bronx Presbyterian Churches Youth Services, I

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<sup>4</sup> Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "List of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches," [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org). (accessed on November 9, 2011).



noticed a minimal representation of young people. Feeling as if most of the other leaders were unconcerned, since all of their sermons in the district churches were geared towards older adults, I contemplated a solution to this problem. The other leaders fail to note that it is the young adult engagement in church service, whether emotional and physical that will ignite and rekindle an already dying flame.

In my observation, I discovered that BPCs consist mostly of elderly people. The elderly are the harbinger of the church and are seen at the forefront in all BPC activities. There are scanty numbers of young people in the BPCs, which may indicate that the church is slowly dying, as young adults who are supposed to continue the church are in all actuality, leaving instead. The BPCs comprises more than 17 churches<sup>5</sup> (see Appendix E). From my observation, almost all the BPCs are reflective of this common problem of young adults' migrating from church. Although, youth migration from SVPC (USA) is not peculiar to the church, the universality and generalization of the problem has also drawn the attention of researchers. Teens, not only migrate to other churches, some leave the church for pleasures outside of the church. In recent research conducted by the Barna Group and published by David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving the Church and Rethinking Faith*, "some never return, while others live indefinitely at the margins of the faith community, attempting to redefine their own spirituality."<sup>6</sup> It is further revealed that young people "view churches as judgmental, overprotective, exclusive, and unfriendly towards doubters. They also consider

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<sup>5</sup> Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "List of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches," [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org), (accessed on November 9, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leave the Church... and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2011), 15.

congregations antagonistic to science and say their Christian experience has been shallow."<sup>7</sup> A young man, approximately 17 years old, who visited SVPC and whom I engaged in discussion with, indicated that the reason for him hating the church and believing that there is no God is due to the hypocrisy of pastors and preachers. He stated that pastors do not do what they preach, because they also are not sure of God's existence. What he was saying is that if the pastors believe in God's existence they would reverence God and represent God in the true sense. I considered his comments and I said to myself, this is the conclusion of the atheists against Christians. Then, I began to wonder if this young man has read Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844-1900) book, titled, *God is Dead*.<sup>8</sup> However, from reviewing SVPC young adults and their reasons for migrating from church, I envisioned the message that they are sending to the church, which reflects the common concern of hypocrisy, an authentic problem in church leadership.

Some SVPC youth labeled the church "adult oriented church," and say that "the church is not a model for young people." This I found out while listening to the President of the Sound View Young Adults Program, Kadeem Marulaz, preach on "Why are You Pushing, Instead of Pulling."<sup>9</sup> Some of the problems and frustrations of teenagers surfaced in his sermon. The only way the silence of teenagers could be broken is to give them the opportunity to voice out their feelings. This is why we conducted a seminar and conference entitled, "Youth/Young Adults Speak-Out!" It is obvious that Kadeem

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<sup>7</sup> Adelle M. Banks, "Teens Leave Churches Seen as Judgmental, Unfriendly According to New Book You Lost Me," <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/09> (accessed October 15, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Robert Brewer, *Postmodernism (1972-Present) in Postmodernism: What You Should Know and Do About It, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc., 2002), 15.

<sup>9</sup> Kadeem Marulaz, "Why are You Pushing, Instead of Pulling" (Sound View Presbyterian Church, 760 Lafayette Avenue, Bronx, NY. October 23, 2011).

symbolizes the young mind within the church due to the young people's response to his sermon, which consisted of a standing ovation and salute from young adults and their cohorts.

After all my observations of SVPC and other BPCs, I proceeded to do research as to why young adults are leaving church. I discovered that much research has already been conducted concerning this matter. For example the Barna Group indicated that "five young Christians," who represented about 59 percent of their researched population, "leave church life either permanently or for extended periods of time after age 15."<sup>10</sup> The researchers also stated that "one in four 18 to 29 years old [claimed that] Christians demonize everything outside of the church, while one in three said, church is boring."<sup>11</sup> These allegations by teens against the church, stem from church leaders' attitude towards young adults in churches, which, though now sprang up, were unopposed in the centuries before or in the era of modernity. During my interviews for this demonstration project there were allegations about SVPC adults not caring. Some of the young people I conversed with, some of whom are still in the church, said to me that they are considering leaving the church, because the adults only care for themselves. No one can deny that this generation is also witness to a generation of young adults' dropout from the church.<sup>12</sup> The issue is getting more and more serious, as the young people continue to migrate and flow away like a never ending stream. Ignoring this problem will lead to the eventual death of

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<sup>10</sup> Adelle M. Banks.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

the church. My advice to the churches is that they should all unify to combat whatever it is that is making the young adults leave.

In my steps towards a solution to the migration of future leaders of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches, I consulted Gary Lindley's article on "evangelism and church growth,"<sup>13</sup> which stresses the importance of young adults' involvement in the ministries. The response to Lindley's questions on how to engage young adults, in the ministry, could also be found in the organization's plan to encourage young adults. However, the ways to effectively reach out to young adults' in churches could be gospel lead by also helping "to move youth and young adults from membership to discipleship."<sup>14</sup> This measure would instill gospel teachings in the hearts of young people, making it impossible for them to deviate from the teachings (Proverb 22:6). Lindley, further indicates that the "... cluster groups and local congregations [would] help them to identify opportunities, understand the culture and to reach youth and young adults."<sup>15</sup> Youth mostly thirst for mentorship; however, the willingness of older adults to mentor young people depends on the receptiveness of young adults, because it is difficult for an adult to volunteer as a mentor if there is no willingness on the mentee to be mentored.

The migration of young adults from Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) in Bronx, NY has been of great concern to many of our church leaders who have tried effortlessly, but fruitlessly to overcome the problem. In some of the BPCs, they have conducted youth conferences and leadership development meetings. The problem now

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<sup>13</sup> Gary Lindley, "The Central Texas Conference," [www.ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1510](http://www.ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1510) (accessed November 16, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

calls for urgent strategies, policies, and processes that will curtail the young men and women and hinder further migration. Although, church leaders are aware of this problem, and some of have policies and programs that could control the flow, “policies and programs could not dictate specific actions and procedures but instead should provide the resources to enable effective action that is appropriate to particular places.”<sup>16</sup> What is the effectiveness of a policy and strategy if it is only theoretical? All policies and strategies that will transform young adults must be put into practice in order to produce substantial results. Policies and strategies, if not implemented, are just paper work, but if implemented, whether good or bad, will influence certain aspects of the organization, if not the entire organization.

### **The Situation of Location**

We must initially express that some things are not entirely true about the location situation of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA). Although, crime in this area is on the rise, I do not believe that the location has a negative effect on the church; rather, it most likely provides an avenue for evangelism, as whatever the situation is, calls for. Sound View Presbyterian Church is presently located at 760 Soundview Avenue in the Bronx, New York, where Cleotha Robertson is Pastor and Moderator of the Session. The Session is the “governing body”<sup>17</sup> in each Presbyterian Church congregation. The

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<sup>16</sup> Ernest T. Stringer, “Research in Professional and Public Life” in *Action Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oak, California: Sage Publications, 2007), 3.

<sup>17</sup> First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, “Session the Governing Body,” [firstpresbyterian.org](http://firstpresbyterian.org) (accessed January 09, 2013).

Session tries cases of indiscipline or cases between members of the church.<sup>18</sup> As Associate Minister of SVPC, I was nominated a member of the Session in 2010. The Church has had several pastors since the inception; Rev. Robert Davidson 1952-1961; Rev. Bruce Calkins 1961-1968; Rev. Edicer Rodriguez 1957-1962; Rev. Henry C. Eiland 1969-1973; Rev. Dr. S. Chukukanne Ekemam 1976-1980; Rev. G. E. Williams 1983-1987; and Rev. Karen L. Smith-Bellin 1989-1990.<sup>19</sup> In 1940, when the church building was erected between Lacombe and Taylor Avenue,<sup>20</sup> the church was a mixed congregation, comprising African-American, Spanish and African.

Soundview is considered a low income<sup>21</sup> residential neighborhood, geographically located in the South Bronx Central section of the borough. According to The NYC Department of Planning, the Bronx, with a population of an estimated “1,392,002 in 2011,”<sup>22</sup> is part of the five boroughs of New York City. The housing and real estate information established that the majority of the residents are renters, which is also confirmed by the numbers of housing developments within the neighborhood. According to Juella Gumbs’ report, the New York City Authority has experienced “eight

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<sup>18</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA). “Session” in *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* (Louisville, KY: The office of the General Assembly, 2009-2011), D-10.0404.

<sup>19</sup> The Sound View Presbyterian Church, “75<sup>th</sup> Diamond Jubilee Anniversary 1924-1999” *Journal*, September 19, 1999; Soundview, Bronx, NY.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Juella Gumbs, “Soundview Backgrounder – Writing New York: Posts from the Boroughs and Beyond,” <http://blsciblogs.baruch.cuny.edu/writing/2010/09/21/soundview-backgrounder> (accessed on January 10, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> New York City Department of Planning, “Population: Current Population Estimates,” [www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/popcur.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/popcur.shtml) (accessed on January 10, 2013).

developments within Soundview alone.”<sup>23</sup> This also accounts for the poverty level in the Soundview neighborhood. The SVPC congregation has a total membership of 173, which is less than the 2011 PC (USA) average of 187.<sup>24</sup> Although, the SVPC membership is less than the average of 187, the congregation is next to the congregation with the highest number (370) in the Bronx PC, which is the Eastchester PC.<sup>25</sup> According to Dr. Foy, who has spent over 54 years in SVPC, the congregation from 1952 to 1961 consisted of over one thousand members and over 600 children in attendance.

Sound View Presbyterian Church is under Bronx Community Board 9. According to the United States Census Bureau the Bronx Community District 9 total population in 2010 was 172,298<sup>26</sup> out of it 64,867 [live] in Soundview. The demography of the District 9 populations when divided to age categories under 18 years was 45,780 and 18 years and above was 126,518, which is also my focus group. The population of males is 30,316 and that of female is 34,551.<sup>27</sup> The transportation routes closer to SVPC are the Cross-Bronx Expressway to the North, the Bruckner Expressway in the center of the neighborhood, and the Bronx River Parkway running from North to South. Soundview Avenue can be accessed by the #6 Train operating from Westchester Ave to Manhattan; the #5 Bus from Pelham Bay to Simpson Street in the Bronx; the #39 Bus from Clason Point (via White

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<sup>23</sup>23 Juell Gumbs.

<sup>24</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), “Ten – Year Trends: Total Membership, Sound View, Bronx, NY.” [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) (accessed on January 10, 2013).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., “Total Membership, Eastchester, Bronx, NY. [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) (accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> New York City Department of Planning, [www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/popcur.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/popcur.shtml) (accessed on January 10, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Julla Gumbs.

Plains Road) to Wakefield – 241 Street; the #36 Bus from Pugsley-Randall Ave to George Washington Bridge Bus Terminal; and the #27 Bus from Clason Point to Simpson (Via Rosedale Ave).<sup>28</sup> The SVPC is zip code is 10472. Soundview areas are under the jurisdiction of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Precinct located at 900 Fteley Avenue and the Fire House E096e, “Story Ave Gang” Engine 96, on Clason Point, Bronx, NY. The Soundview neighborhood enjoys the advantage of the Soundview Park, which is also called the “Gateway to the Bronx River.”<sup>29</sup> The park has been renovated and now features many facilities such as “baseball, soccer fields, a running track and grass fields.”<sup>30</sup> Provision from the NYC government is evident in this neighborhood. Sometimes, during summer, residents gather at the park for barbecues and sport competitions which are held there. In 2009, SVPC young men engaged the older men in a friendly basketball match.

Sound View PC is also a neighbor to the Baptist, Spanish, Seventh Day Adventist, Holy Cross Catholic, some Pentecostal, and the San Andres Presbyterian churches, which actually separated from the SVPC in 1954 to form the Spanish speaking congregation of San Andres Church.<sup>31</sup> Soundview educational system has about 91 schools, including elementary, intermediate, and high school. One would think that with approximately 91 schools, the average grade would be above half, but the average age according to the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> City of New York Parks & Recreation, “Soundview Park,” [www.nycgovparks.org/parks/soundviewpark](http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/soundviewpark) (accessed on January 10, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> New York City Department of City Planning, “Greenway Master Plan: Soundview Park to Ferry Point Park,” [www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/transport/td\\_fullsoundview.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/transport/td_fullsoundview.pdf) (accessed on January 10, 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Sound View Presbyterian Church, “75<sup>th</sup> Diamond Jubilee Anniversary 1924-1999” *Journal*.



finding on “trulia” was 2.8/10. The absence of colleges in the neighborhood may account for the reasons why “only 10 percent attained a Bachelor’s degree or higher.”<sup>32</sup> This may also account for the high crime rate in the neighborhood.

The beginning of what is now called the SVPC was in the year 1918 at the house of some members. The Christians, upon who God bestowed the gift and the talent of establishing the church, were called the “pioneered of the church movement in Clason Point.”<sup>33</sup> Although the church meetings were held at a “distracting Chicken Coop,”<sup>34</sup> members’ spirited effort and motivation uplifted the other members and the church building was erected in 1924 at 760 Soundview Ave., on the corner of Lafayette Ave., where the church is currently situated. One important aspect of the Sunday school, which remains remarkable to some of the members, like Dr. Clementine Foy, is the growth of the Sunday School from 1952 to 1961. As it was written on the 1924 – 1999 journals, and also confirmed by Dr. Foy, Rev. Robert M. Davidson went knocking on peoples’ doors, in order to bring the gospel to them at a time of city housing development completion. This brought many family and children to SVPC; the children at the Sunday school during that period were over 600. SVPC leadership then took upon themselves the spirit of the “Great Commission;” having known and understood the importance of Jesus Christ’s statement, to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). They seized the opportunity of to bring the gospel to the newly existing housing project. However, those children from 1952 to 1961 must be parents themselves now and their own children

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<sup>32</sup> Juelle Gumbs.

<sup>33</sup> Sound View Presbyterian Church.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

are no longer coming to the church. Dr. Foy who has spent almost 60 years in SVPC is disappointed, as expressed in her statement to me that “the current pastor does not care whether we have children in this church.” Dr. Foy’s discontent was taken into consideration. Some of the leaders of the youth ministry have left the church unannounced. Elder Mayphil Whyte is also disappointed, as she said, “all the children are leaving SVPC and nothing is being done to keep them.” After listening to Dr. Foy who is the chairperson of the Christian Education Committee and Elder Whyte who is also the Coordinator of the Youth Ministry, I asked then asked them “what can we do about it?”

### **What Can We Do About It?**

The study of young adult migration from church is very important, so in order to answer the question, “what can we do about it,” we first must thoroughly review the problem. There are many personal views and research as to why young adults are leaving the church. So the site team and I developed plans towards solving the problem.

As part of our goal and strategies, we visited some Bronx Presbyterian Churches, to see if they also have the same problem of young people ages 18-19 migrating away. The ultimate reality is that youth are leaving Bronx Presbyterian Churches. I indicated my finding in my challenge statement, which read, as Associate Minister of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), Sound View, Bronx, New York, I’ve noticed the mass migration of 18-19 year old teens/young adults from the Bronx Presbyterian Church (USA); the attendance rate has dropped almost 70%. Ignoring this problem will lead to the death of the church. This demonstration project will create an educational process that will engage and encourage the young adults to become more involved in the life of the church.

With the help of my Professor Dr. Wanda Lundy and Dr. Keith Russell, I proceeded to form my site team, which include Pastor Dr. Cleotha Robertson, Pastor Francis Inofomoh, Rev. Sonja West, Deaconess Blessing Etsekhume, Elder Mayphil Whyte, Sister Patricia Mason-Harrigan, and Sister Charlene Belfort, who have assisted me since I started this demonstration project and who help me create an educational process and implement my plan. We created 4 goals and strategies and implemented them. We created awareness centered around the demonstration project and its primary focus, we visited other churches, both Presbyterian and non-Presbyterian, we did team building in order to implement the plan, and we lobbied and manipulated the SVPC in a public relations process in efforts for them to consider our plans to keep the remaining young adults from leaving church, all while considering how to bring back the already lost sheep.

While it's not always easy to describe where the problem sprang from, we have also read and heard that many young adults are no longer connecting with church. So after visualizing the problem of youth migration from church, I concluded from various researches that the problem is not just in the Bronx Presbyterian Church. For example, Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell in their book, *American Grace* state that the problem started in 1946 – 1964 with the baby boomer.<sup>35</sup> The solution to prevent young adults' age 18-19 further movement from the church to an unknown place may be different. Some of them gave reasons for leaving; the church is judgmental; hypocritical; sheltered (old fashioned); too political; not caring; lack of love; too much criticism;

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<sup>35</sup> Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, 76.

adults abusive of young people; discrimination against young people; and insensitivity to the issues of young adults. Such were the reason the young adults' levied against the SVPC. There may be other reasons, when we at look at different churches and their settings and denominations. The most fascinating allegation, which the young people levy against SVPC, is that the church is not a model for young people and is adult-oriented. Ed Stetzer, et al, wrote that "it is a mistake to put young people into one grouping and say "all young adults think this or that.""<sup>36</sup> However, my recommendation at the conclusive part of this demonstration project may be a helpful hint for other churches.

Sometimes it may not be necessary to describe in detail the demographics of the young adults and what they resemble. However, my demonstration project concerns young adults ages 18-19, who have migrated to other churches, some of whom are married, in college, have travelled to other boroughs and live very far away, have left the church out of annoyance and frustration, or are in jail or busy working.

After my observation of continuous migration of young adults age 18-19 from SVPC, the "New York Theological Seminary afforded me the necessary,"<sup>37</sup> tools to raise awareness to the BPCs and develop a plan, which was supported by my site team. In my demonstration project, with the help of Dr. Wanda Lundy, I wrote my challenge statement, which indicated the path I followed towards solution of the problem. In this first chapter, which is also the introduction of this demonstration project, apart from the SVPC journal which I used to gather information on the SVPC, I did some library and

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<sup>36</sup> Ed Stetzer, Richie Stanley and Jason Hayes. *Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 2009), 9.

<sup>37</sup> Judy Davis Als-Pride. "Introduction" in *Cumbayah Single-Parent Family Ministry. A Demonstration Project* (New York, NY: The New Theological Seminary, 2009), 3.

internet research on the geographical location of Soundview the demographics of the area, and the beginning stages of SVPC. The focus, the problem, and the whereabouts of the children, age 18-19 are also included in the introduction. In Chapter 2, “Connecting the Dots,” I enumerated the historical migrating of the BPCs, how the social, economic, and political factor affects the SVPC, and the biblical, spiritual, and theological consequences of the migration of the young adults. As I navigate into Chapter 3, “How to Reverse the Trend,” I reiterate the challenge statement, the plan of implementation, and the design, procedure and assessment, which indicate how we engaged the young adults in finding solutions to the migration problem. We plan to do the following:

- **Goal 1:** Awareness raising the consciousness of the BPCs concerning the problems of 18-19 year old young adult migration from the churches.
- **Goal 2:** Building a team. The organization and unification of the site team in planning to prevent further migration of young adults.
- **Goal 3:** The team created the educational process by developing the proposal that was used to engaged the SVPC young adults in services to prevent further migration.
- **Goal 4:** Implementation of the process, which was the strategic planning of the proposed project.

Chapter 4, “The Project Described,” describes the patterns that helped me achieve my goals and strategies, which also created an avenue that I used to engage the young adults. Chapter 5, the “Evaluation Process,” deals with the evaluation process from the site team, the Christian Education Committee, the Youth Ministry, the Pastor and the participants at the seminar on July 21, 2012 and the conference on August 18, 2012. This

evaluation was done using oral and written feedback. Chapter 6 “is an introspective glimpse into my ministerial competencies and my personal”<sup>38</sup> skill, which I used in completing the demonstration project. Some of the competencies were drafted by my site team, after observing my personal relationship with them, at home, the seminary and my involvement in the church. But the competencies I have chosen are as follows: as a theologian, a preacher, spiritual leader, and as an agent of change. Chapter 7 is a site team report on my four competencies and how I performed using those skills. Chapter 8 demonstrates the manner in which both the church and I were transformed and also the change that has been taking place in Sound View Presbyterian Church since the commencement of the demonstration project. This demonstration project is accompanied by appendices (See Appendixes B - P), showing what we did for the accomplishment of the project. Basically, our effort is to try to get youth back to the church and keep those who are still in the church from leaving. Following the parable of Jesus Christ, if we have one hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, we will leave the ninety nine out in the open to look for the missing one until we find it. It is the responsibility of the church to look for the lost sheep.

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<sup>38</sup> Judy Davis Als-Pride, 11.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CONNECTING THE DOTS**

#### **Historical Migration from the Bronx Presbyterian Churches**

What do the pastors, leaders, and congregations of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) perceive to be the central factors surrounding the migration of young adults' from the church.<sup>39</sup> Would it be possible to control and prevent such migration in anticipation of future participation from youngsters as future leaders of the church? In terms of developing young adults to be leaders, could we create an atmosphere that will obstruct the rapidity of the migration flow? There were times when attendance in the young adult Sunday school at Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), was said to be over 600 children, but now young attendance during service is barely noticeable.

To respond to this question is to better understand how the perception of the pastor has changed in regards to the migration of young adults from sound view Presbyterian Church (USA). Can the church prevent further migration in anticipation of future youngsters participating as future leaders of the church?

#### **Response**

Millions of young adults leave active involvement in church as they exit their teen years. Some never return, while others live indefinitely at the margins of the faith community, attempting to define their own spirituality. Some return to robust engagement with an established church,

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<sup>39</sup> Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III, "From Nonessential to Essential Church," in *Essential Church: Reclaiming a Generation of Dropout*. The research question is based on the question asked by the writers, Rainer and Rainer III, "Why do more than two-third of churchgoing young adult American leave the church? Or to ask the question positively, why do one-third of churchgoing young adult American stay in the church?" 6.

while some remain faithful through the transition from adolescence to adulthood and beyond.<sup>40</sup>

A brief historical of the American young adults' leaving church may sound interesting, but what is the perception of the pastors' back then as compared to the perception of the pastor of the Bronx PCs., now in regards to the migration of young adults, with SVPC as the focus of the demonstration project? My personal account of SVPC's relationship with its young people is mediocre. I have witnessed most leaders only caring when the young people are physically in the church, but not caring when they are not in the church. David Kinnaman stated that "millions of young adults leave active involvement in church as they exit their teen years." the history of young adults leaving church has not just started. This trend has been ongoing in the church and it is not peculiar to the SVPC situation. However, we cannot affirm that the youth have the same motives or reasons for leaving. Results from various researches prove that the issue will remain with us.

David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons in their book, *unchristian* tried to propose solutions to help resolve this problem, by interviewing young people, but found out that the majority of the young adults (outsiders) or (unchurched) ones that they interviewed do not "trust" the "Christian faith."<sup>41</sup> Kinnaman and Lyons gathered from their interview with the young generation that they "reject Jesus because they feel rejected by Christians."<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, the faith community is also not helping in this matter, because instead of the young people sticking with church, they tend to migrate to non-

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<sup>40</sup> David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book, 2011), 19.

<sup>41</sup> David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



divine engagement or service, which also “alters their willingness to commit their lives to Jesus.”<sup>43</sup> Therefore, out of resentfulness, young adults reject Jesus Christ and attempt to define their spirituality. While Kinnaman and Lyons posted their questionnaire towards the unchurched, Ed Stetzer, Richie Stanley and Jason Hayes felt pity for the church, so they aim at helping “the church find and reach these lost young people” who are also called the “always unchurched and de-churched.”<sup>44</sup> According to the three authors, the always unchurched are those who have never been involved in church while the de-churched are those who as a child were involved in church.<sup>45</sup> The political situation in America especially created the “religious polarization and pluralism”<sup>46</sup> which also paved the way for change in religion and how people are committed to church. According to Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell in *American Grace*, a research book, which examines what precipitated change in the American society and the role that religion also plays, stated that in 1960, “as theological and political conservatism began to converge, religiously inflected issues emerged.”<sup>47</sup> Religiously inflected are the various voices that surfaced during the 1960’s, which opposed and reacted to the “theological and political conservatism” that were kicking against change. What came after the disagreement is that,

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ed Stetzer, Richie Stanley and Jason Hayes, *Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them*, (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 2009), 1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>46</sup> Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster Paperback, 2010), 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 3.

A growing number of Americans, especially young people, have come to disavow religion. For many, their aversion to religion is rooted in unease with the association between religion and conservative politics. If religion equals republican, then they have decided that religion is not for them.<sup>48</sup>

This is part of the reason why young doubters are leaving the church in large numbers.

They disowned religion because the ignorance concerning change as theology and politics converged denies young people the right to manipulate and thus created nervousness on behalf of the young people, making them dislike religion. The young people also do not like the idea that religion and politics should go together; religion and politics are two different subjects and so they are to be treated as such. Religion should be separated from politics and vice versa. In other words the trend of young adults leaving church has taken another turn in the history of religion. Looking at our congregations these days, you will find the decrease in the young adults' population very visible. The empty seats pervade the church, so that the absent of young people are exposed. This also accounted for the lack of young adults in church, where they are supposed to be in the majority in the congregations. On Sunday, December 23, 2012, which was before the Christmas Eve, I was so disappointed. I'm used to seeing crowd in the congregation on the Sunday before Christmas, but on this day it was so sadden me that I see so many vacancies on the benches in our church. The adult choir sang Christmas carol which I recorded on my ipad. The more I watch the recording, the more it made me feel uncomfortable, because of the scanty people in the church. The

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<sup>48</sup> Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, 3.

Christmas Eve was even worst; barely could you see people on the night of the service. What is going on?

Drew Dyck in “Christianity Today,” on “the leavers: young doubters exit the church,” reiterated the writing of Robert Putnam and David Campbell in their book *American Grace*. Dyck in the article stated that the authors reported that:

young Americans are dropping out of religion at an alarming of five to six times the historic rate (30 to 40 percent have no religion today, versus 5 to 10 percent a generation ago).<sup>49</sup>

American religion has become more divided as the shift along religious lines has not been difficult to cover up. Although, there was division among the Christian faith, but it was between the catholic versus protestant. The tensions were between the two sectors. The American population is known to belong to a church or a religious organization, as they accounted for 38 percent when compared to Australians with 16 percent, 9 percent of Italians and 4 percent of the French.<sup>50</sup> Doubters may question the rationale behind Putnam and Campbell’s argument, for they see the United States involvement in religious matters. Even in 2008, the united states president, President Barack Obama was asked to declare his religious faith. The news was broadcasted all over the media.

The survey by Putnam and Campbell, giving America 38 percent when compared to other countries may also give American a head up against other countries. However, drew Dyck, “a manager in the church ministry media group at “Christianity Today,”

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<sup>49</sup> Drew Dyck, the author *Generation EX – Christian: Why Young Adults are Leaving the Faith ... and How to bring them Back*, quoted Robert Putnam and David Campbell report in their book *American Grace* in his book (page 188) and also in “The Leavers: Young Doubters Exit the Church: More than in Previous Generation, 20- and 30- Somethings are Abandoning the Faith. Why? [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/november/27.40.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/november/27.40.html) (accessed 12/31/12).

<sup>50</sup> Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, 8-9.

stated that “there are alarming indications that young adults are leaving the church in record numbers.”<sup>51</sup> John H. Armstrong also stated in his December 14, 2010 article that “some question this type of data but increasingly it seems to be beyond dispute.” the data is confirmed by others research data.

However, Putnam and Campbell solidified their argument by also giving the historical argument to reinforce their point. They stated that, “closer examination of differences among the cohorts reveals that the pace of decline in religious attendance from generation to generation is not constant.”<sup>52</sup> For instance, the decline was in 1968 among college freshmen, those who had not attended any religious services were barely 8 percent, while in 2009 the number tripled to 25 percent.<sup>53</sup> David Kinnaman also confirmed that the result of the decline of young adults leaving the church is not constant. Kinnaman in a study conducted in 2011, by the Barna Group, which is published in a book entitled, *You Lost Me*, stated that 59 percent of young people with Christians’ background reported that they had or have “dropped out of attending church, after going regularly.”<sup>54</sup> When compared to Robert Putnam and David Campbell figures, there is a wider increase from 2009 to 2011. Other evidence that the numbers of young adults leaving church are not constant is in an article by Drew Dyck in “Christianity Today” in

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<sup>51</sup> John H. Armstrong, “Act 3: Equipping Leaders for Unity In Christ’s Mission,” [www.johnharmstrongtypepad.com](http://www.johnharmstrongtypepad.com) (accessed 12/31/12).

<sup>52</sup> Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, 76.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>54</sup> David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 23.

November, 2010, which also states that “other survey result have been grimmer.”<sup>55</sup> The results of other surveys have been depressing because the rate of young people leaving church is alarming, according to Dyck,

Recent studies have brought the trend to light. Among the findings released in 2009 from the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), one stood out. the percentage of Americans claiming “no religion” almost doubled in about two decades, climbing from 8.1 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 2008.<sup>56</sup>

From all indications, “recent studies have brought the trend to light.” according to Putnam and Campbell the decline in 1968 among college freshmen who had claimed to have “no religion” were barely 8 percent, while in 2009, the number tripled to more than 25 percent. Another survey result released by the (ARIS), stated that the result in two decades almost doubled the trend as it climbed from 8.1 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 2008.

### **The question is how did we get there?**

The 1950s was very significant in the history of American religion. It was during this period that the famous *Ten Commandments* movie emerged. According to Putnam and Campbell, the fraternal order of eagles and Cecil B. DeMiller joined together to produce the movie and “donated monuments of the biblical ten commandments to communities all around the country.”<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately, government sanction was placed on the Ten Commandments whose monument were located everywhere; in public parks

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<sup>55</sup> Drew Dyck, [www.christianitytoday.com](http://www.christianitytoday.com).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Putnam and Campbell, 1.

and even in front of courthouse.<sup>58</sup> The 1950s was the period that invented “in god we trust,” which later became the official motto in the dollar bill. In 1960, America also witnessed “religious polarization and pluralism,”<sup>59</sup> as Americans were divided along party lines and separated into different religious groups, specifically, catholic and Protestants. However, with the polarization and group separation America remains on average, a “highly religious nation.”<sup>60</sup> One can still see a reflection of the past religious life among the American people. For instance, we see the condemnation of al Qaeda all over the world by Americans.

I have often heard the phrase, “America is God’s own country.” now; I see why America is regarded as God’s own country. From the above expression by Putman and Campbell, it seems that everybody in America is busy with religion, especially on the church level. However, 17 percent of the population attended church in 1776, 34 percent in 1850, 37 percent in 1860, and 35 percent in 1870.<sup>61</sup> The outcome from 1776 to 1870 negated the expression, that “America is God own country.” According to the report, one minister trying to save souls in the American heartland in the early 1800s wrote that “there are American families in this part of the country who never saw a bible, nor heard of Jesus Christ”<sup>62</sup> however, the chart started to climb from 1890 to 2000. Middle-classed

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>61</sup> “Made In America: A Christian America? What History Shows, [www.madeinamericathebook.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/finke-stark-e12685997255738.jpg](http://www.madeinamericathebook.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/finke-stark-e12685997255738.jpg) (accessed on 1/1/13).

<sup>62</sup> “Made In America: A Christian America?”

Americans joined the church in great numbers and by the twentieth century, Americans had made church attendance a norm. In 1980 and 2000, Americans now attended church in alarming numbers; there was equal number in percentage (62) to be precise for there was increase in 1980 and 2000.<sup>63</sup> The bone of contention fell as America experienced a drastic decline in young adults' church attendance between 1946 and 1964. The alarming rate and the pace at which the decline of young adults leaving the church within these periods (1946-1964), cannot be measured, as the baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964), "came of age from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s."<sup>64</sup> However, the generation of the baby boomers significantly accelerated the decline.

After World War II America witnessed a breakthrough in public religiosity. Most important, is the return of veterans and their wives<sup>65</sup> from Canada and Australia to the United States.<sup>66</sup> Putnam and Campbell wrote that the veterans and their wives dominated the religious atmosphere so much that "some observers classified it as another of the great awakening."<sup>67</sup> The veterans and their wives started having children who also swelled the church congregation and church population. Church attendance increased from 3 percent in 1950 to 51 percent in 1957. Church attendance figures rose mainly

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Putnam and Campbell, 76.

<sup>65</sup> Putnam and Campbell, 83.

<sup>66</sup> Matt Rosenberg, "Baby Boom: The Population Baby Boom of 1946 – 1964 in the United States," [www.geography.about.com/od/populationgeography/a/babyboom\\_2.htm](http://www.geography.about.com/od/populationgeography/a/babyboom_2.htm) (Accessed on 1/2/13).

<sup>67</sup> Putnam and Campbell, 83.

among the young adults, who were aged “twenty-somethings.”<sup>68</sup> The dramatic increase in the number of babies delivered from 1946 to 1964 is called the baby boom. After World War II, the baby boomer, took advantage of the GI Bill; they attended colleges to become the first educated members in their families.<sup>69</sup> The GI Bill is simply a veteran educational benefit, which the baby boomer used as an advantage to be educated in higher education. The GI Bill became law on June 13, 1944.<sup>70</sup> Education opens the way to different opportunities and also it motivates other members of a family to follow suit. However, as the baby boomers led the surge to the advantage of the church population, so they led the surge to the rapid decrease in church population.

In the 1960s there was the indication that change was eminent, not only in church attendance, but specifically, a drop in the young adults’ attendance. Some boomers sought for new spiritual homes and were called, “seekers.”<sup>71</sup> The most intriguing situation occurred when the Gallup Poll was conducted and it was discovered that those who said religion was very important fell from 75 percent in 1952 and 70 percent in 1965 to 52 percent.<sup>72</sup> Most significantly, the number of young people leaving the church dropped excessively. For instance, “among twenty-somethings the rate of the decline in

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>70</sup> United States Department of Veterans Affairs, in “Born of Controversy: The GI Bill of Rights” in the “The GI Bill’s History,” [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov).

<sup>71</sup> Putnam and Campbell, 97.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.



church attendance was more than twice the national average.”<sup>73</sup> I don’t see this decline as funny, because since the 1960’s, young adults have been leaving the church in an alarming rate. They are not just leaving the church, they lost interest in the Christian faith and also reject Jesus Christ.

Drew Dyck called them the “lost sheep.”<sup>74</sup> They are the young adults’ leaving their Christian faith. They are also the “young people who have wandered from God.”<sup>75</sup> Researchers called them “generation y, or the millennials,” those (born after 1980).<sup>76</sup> Dyck seek ways on how to bring the “young ex-Christians”<sup>77</sup> back to church. Dyck also designed different names for the young church leaver: “the postmodernist; recoilers; the modernist; the neo-pagan; the rebel; and the drifter.”<sup>78</sup> The most important aspect of these different names is that all of them are young people who have decided to abandon the church. The type of language the young church leaver uses or associates with and how they relate to issues, is what Dyck called postmodernism.<sup>79</sup> “The postmodernist views hold that there is a different “truth” for each person.”<sup>80</sup> Postmodernist are opposed to absolute moral truth. I believe that this is their assertion of denying the fact of the Bible,

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>74</sup> Drew Dyck, 11.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Drew Dyck, 24.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 27

which in other words denying the fact of the biblical principle which also states the existence of God.

The recoilers are those who as a child believed in what their parents placed in their mind concerning the Christian faith, but as they grew older, found out that even their parents didn't stick to the faith they confessed. This is imperative, because parents in most cases are the first people the child see when growing up and the child adheres to what the parents have taught him/her. Writing about the "last straws,"<sup>81</sup> Dyck told the story of Katie who gave reason for leaving the faith. To Katie, "the fact that her mother attributed her actions to God's leading must have been disillusioning for Katie."<sup>82</sup> The recoilers frown at people who say they are one thing, but do the opposite; they are also called hypocrites. Katie also opposed the youth leader for not speaking the truth. The youth leader said to her "the only reason to leave a marriage was infidelity."<sup>83</sup> Then Katie asked, "what if my husband was beating me?"<sup>84</sup> According to Dyck, the leader then smile and said to Katie, "did your parents give you that?" This was the second reason Katie left the faith. The leader must have known what was going on between Katie and her parents and she decided to use that to stop Katie's questioning of biblical principles, but surprisingly, Katie reacted negatively, by leaving the church. Her reaction may not be comprehensible. Young people are often disappointed to see a negative response from church leaders. No matter what the church says, it may not be in their best interest.

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<sup>81</sup> Drew Dyck, 50.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

Leaders should apply counseling methods when dealing with young people. If the youth leader had said to Katie, you must leave your husband as soon as he lays his hand on you, Katie would have believed her. Sometimes the truth is difficult when it comes to our relationship with our young adults. However, Katie and the youth leader scenario shows us how some preachers use everything they know about some members of their congregation to prepare sermons and preach. The modern leavers, according to Dyck, are the young people who

love linear thinking, objective truth, and the western tradition of rational thought. If anything, most of them feel Christian faith is too concerned for the marginalized, a dangerous naiveté in a Darwinian, survival-of-the-fittest world.<sup>85</sup>

Most of the characteristics listed above are the atheists' philosophy. Although, the atheists' are educated people, they embrace Christianity with disdain. In March 2012, I was talking to one of my friends, whom I was unaware, had change her religion from been a Buddhist to atheist. The first thing she said to me was that "Jesus Christ cannot save her." I wondered where this remark came from; since I never said anything about Jesus to her. But when I later confronted her in regards to her comment about Jesus Christ, she said to me that she changed her religion; that she became a Buddhist as result of her parents, but now she has decided to follow her instinct and is now an atheist. The atheists feel that Christian faith is too "marginalized." Dyck stated, "I wasn't disappointed."<sup>86</sup> It is always good to acquire knowledge by exploring all avenues for

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<sup>85</sup> Drew Dyck, 74.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

investigation, especially concerning adults and their behavior when leaving the church and its consequences.

The next section Dyck gave is section 4, the “neo-pagans.”<sup>87</sup> Somehow some young adults leave the church to join “witchcraft.”<sup>88</sup> Why witchcraft? Wiccans, as they are called, “believe in a unifying energy present in nature that can be manipulated through magic to bring personal rewards such as love, financial blessing, and general happiness.”<sup>89</sup> Although, Wiccans claimed that they don’t believe in “transcendent deity” and god or goddess, but they “regard themselves as divine”<sup>90</sup> and refer to themselves as god. From all indications the wiccans do not give authority to the Christian god or Jesus Christ. They also do not believe that rewards come from heaven and they believed in their own effort through magic to love, gain financial blessing, and bring happiness to themselves. This is very unfortunate as they disperse the church for such beliefs. The rebels, according to dictionary meaning, are those who protest against something. They want to do their own thing. Andrew, in the generation ex – Christian book, said “I was driven by self-gratification.”<sup>91</sup> Andrew the son of a prominent evangelism in the United States was seeking pleasure. Therefore, he abandoned his faith to smoke dope and to chase women,<sup>92</sup> which led him to rebel against his father’s Christian religion. The

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<sup>87</sup> Drew Dyck, 110.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Drew Dyck, 110.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

drifters, in Dyck's book, are the "ones whose faith is rooted in shallow soil and is ultimately carried off in the wind."<sup>93</sup> Dyck reiterated the parable of the sower to illustrate the point of the drifter leaving the church. The drifters are those who take their time in leaving the church. According to Dyck, "instead they leave gradually, almost imperceptibly."<sup>94</sup> The drifters leave the church unnoticeable. Sometimes, the effect of peer pressure is costly. Jenny, who was an active member of the church, moved in with her boyfriend and never returned to church. You may also view the story in Drew Dyck's book, *The Generation of Ex- Christian*.<sup>95</sup>

In my opinion, and as a result of the surveys conducted by my site team during the seminar and conference, and during my interview, it is certain that the pastor's perception has not changed minutely towards young adults' migration. Based on the history of young adults leaving church, starting from those that were born in 1946-1964 (baby boomers); those that were born after 1980 (Generation Y or Millennial Generation) and those who were born after 2003 (Generation Z) versus adults who have managed to stay in church come rain or sunshine, most of the mainline church are adult oriented. However, the future of the church will be determined by young adults. Some slogans state that the youth are the leaders of today. I queried such slogans because if the youth are the leaders of today, how come they are not given the chance to head even their own ministries? The history of SVPC indicates that between 1952-1961, the Sunday school children were over 600 as opposed to now, in which the SVPC has on average, 15 young

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<sup>93</sup> Drew Dyck, 159.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 159-164.

adults' attending church regularly. Past generations may have rebelled for different reasons, but then come back to church.

The baby boomer generation returned and is now leading the church. Probably, one day the Bronx Presbyterian Churches young adult who migrated will remember the church and make a U-turn back to church. Most pastors are lamenting for their young people, because some of the youth just decide to leave when they are emancipated.

Young people inhabited mainly a Judeo-Christian culture, which interrupts with their being fully Christians. They grow up now with technology and other scientific material. They interpret the bible through scientific devices. We wish they would come back like the previous generations who came back to the faith. However, the young adults in this generation have been weakened beyond recognition, because evangelism and outreach are weak in Bronx Presbyterian Churches. In order to create an atmosphere that will obstruct the rapid migration, we have to re-examine the way we evangelize and rather do evangelism that make sense to Jesus Christ. I believe that some young adults in BPCs are followers who accompany their peers to other churches because they are very comfortable with the new church, while those who are still staying at home on Sunday during church service can be re-converted.

### **Social, Economic and Political Factor**

How does the Bronx geographical location, occupational distribution, and racial diversity enhance the problem of young people migrating from the sound view

Presbyterian Church (USA)?<sup>96</sup> What role does parental migration from the Bronx to the suburbs and other states and counties in search of occupations play in the migration of the youth? Statistical data indicates that though the Bronx population is over three million, the Bronx Presbyterian churches membership has no corresponding increase.

### **Response**

The Bronx is among the five boroughs in New York City. The others boroughs include Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and Long Island, but the center of attraction is Manhattan. The Bronx was a part of the Manhattan borough known as New York County until in 1914, in which it became an official designated county separate from the New York County.<sup>97</sup> Manhattan is the city of cities. We see people from other boroughs and counties and even from upstate coming to Manhattan to work. In 1860, the “first black family” that settled in the Bronx were “mixed blood” from the south.<sup>98</sup> Since then, so many different families, all over the world have migrated to the Bronx. The response to the young adults’ migration problem will be encouraging if only we have a solution for it. Although, with 23 percent of the immigrant population in 1990, the Bronx had the lowest immigrant population, compared to Brooklyn 29 percent, Manhattan at 25.8 percent, and queens with the highest at 36 percent.<sup>99</sup> The Bronx is multi-populated

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<sup>96</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations, Artistry, Choice, and Leadership 4<sup>th</sup>*, in the “Structural Frame,” the “Human Resource Frame,” the “Political Frame” and Symbolic Frame,” Bolman and Deal writes about the strategies on Reframing Change in the Organization, 43-67, 119-163, 229-245, 251-277.

<sup>97</sup> Janet L. Abu-Lughod. *New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: America’s Global Cities* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 445.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 490.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

due to immigrants living in the boroughs. The importance of immigrants cannot be emphasized enough. They boost the labor and garment trades, the grocery stores are nearer to residential houses, which also intensify competition among commercial businesses and restaurants in the Bronx.

However, the Bronx is the home of the Bronx Presbyterian churches. Young adults are migrating from the BPCs, is it the geographical location where the churches are situated that is causing them to migrate, or is it the lack of employment or social diversity? One of the characteristics of the immigrant is that it brings about cultural and linguistic diversity,<sup>100</sup> which may be good for further education and cultural unity. Sometimes, culture works in a surprising way, it may help bring unity rather than bring disunity. The Bronx has been known for its increasing poverty. The cost of poverty is the class formation; the population see themselves as belonging to a different class. As result of poverty, Bronx population and population in other boroughs within NYC, such as Brooklyn, have “become more polarized by ethnicity, race and class.”<sup>101</sup> Poverty causes division in culture, and creates competition among people, which may eventually lead to discrimination.

The Bronx population is close to 1.4 million. According to the New York City Department of Planning, in 2011, the Bronx population is estimated to be 1,392,002.<sup>102</sup> There is an increase of about 6,894 when compared to the population of 1,385,108 in 2010. The population increase indicates the number of housing projects that the city

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>102</sup> New York City Department of Planning.



provides for the vast majority of people living in the Bronx. For instance, the New York City Housing Authority has built eight housing developments in the Soundview area alone.<sup>103</sup> The Bronx is basically a residential borough. In 1953, Charles A. Buckley became the Democratic leader of Bronx County and did an exemplary thing for the Bronx. He gained Federal funding which was used to construct housing developments and highways in the Bronx, among which, include the major Deegan Expressway, Bruckner Expressway, and high-rise buildings, which is also in the Soundview area.<sup>104</sup> Although there is still industrial estate within the borough, such as Hunts Point, and shopping malls, like the Bronx Terminal Market, and also popular restaurants like City Island, most of the earlier investors moved with business to other boroughs, counties and further upstate.

In the Bronx, most of the avenues, streets and boulevards are lined with houses or apartment buildings, or commercial buildings and stores. The Grand Concourse is a prime example.<sup>105</sup> The Bronx is spiced with factories, theaters, a stadium (Yankee Stadium) and pop music. This borough has “one of the best known zoos in the entire United States, and is home to the New York Botanical Garden, an important scientific institution”<sup>106</sup> in America. As far as the zoo is concerned, I have always seen elephants on television and could never imagine how big the creature actually was. I saw the elephant for the first

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<sup>103</sup> Juella Gumbs.

<sup>104</sup> Kenneth L. Jackson. “The City of New York” in *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2010), 145.

<sup>105</sup> *The World Book Encyclopedia*, 2012 ed., s. v. “The New York City: Bronx.”

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

time at the Bronx Zoo. The Bronx has tourist centers, “the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, which honors the memory of outstanding Americans.”<sup>107</sup> The Hall of Fame is located at 2183 University Avenue in the Bronx and honors prominent Americans who have had significant impact on history within the United States. The Bronx educational system is another reason why people visit. Academic institutions such as Fordham University, Lehman College, Bronx Community College, and schools within the City University of New York are located in the borough.

Between 1980 and 1990 all of New York, including the Bronx, increasingly became poorer. Income disparity in the Bronx led to a growing class polarization and poor people “concentrated in the city.”<sup>108</sup> The poverty level is still very visible in the borough, crime rate is increasing, and “the proportion of middle-class residents had declined precipitously,”<sup>109</sup> which can be traced to racial discrimination. Discrimination is a social and cultural factor that hinders people. If there are particular people or groups being discriminated against, certainly, there will be disunity among such people, which may lead to occupation or employment leaning to one side of the curve; also, productivity will be lacking. The population of the Bronx was almost 1,500,000,<sup>110</sup> between 1950 and 1960, but the population started declining as people moved from the borough to other counties. In 1980 and 1990, the Bronx also witnessed a “racial succession.”<sup>111</sup> This

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Janet L. Abu-Lughod, 296.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 485.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 490.

succession took a toll in the Bronx, as “white” population started moving away from the borough, which was known as the White Flight. The percentage of whites was 47 percent in 1980, decreasing to 36 percent in 1990.<sup>112</sup> Many factors must have been responsible for the succession. Racial discrimination is one, as the blacks continue to pour into the borough, the whites continue to exit. “invasion-succession” and the white flight,” there was also “*resegregation*.”<sup>113</sup> This took place not only in the Bronx, but in other boroughs in New York City as well. The Bronx River Parkway (1906-23), newly constructed by Robert Moses, made it very easy for the secessionist to depart the Bronx. The immigrants that left the Bronx were Italian, Jewish, and Irish. This is around the same time that the SVPC children were over six hundred in number, during the herald of Rev. Robert Davidson, pastor from 1952 to 1961. The succession of the white congregation also led to the migration of the SVPC young adults, who though some of them must have had their own children now; while some of their may have been in the SVPC. This situation occurred with all the BPCs’ young people.

The Bronx resident also still enjoys some musicologist like salsa, rap music and more. The population comprise of African-American, African, White, Puerto Rican, Korean, Vietnamese, Indian, Pakistanis, Cuba, Dominican, Jamaican, and Russian. The borough still boasts of its immigrant status. However, we cannot rule out the level of crime and politic that is affecting the Soundview area of the Bronx. Crime rates began to increase. As racial discrimination and desegregation grew, Bronx crime rates

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Janet L. Abu-Lughod, 297.

skyrocketed. In one of my publications in the “Change Newspaper,” entitled, “Conversation with God,” I listed statistics from “The New York Times,” dated Friday, July 15, 2011. In regards to the murder rate in the Bronx from 2003 – 2009, out of 3,780 homicides cases in NYC the Bronx had 24%, next to Brooklyn 40% and Queens 18%. Out of 100,000 yearly homicide cases, the Bronx had the highest with 11.0%; Brooklyn 10.1% and Manhattan 6.0%.<sup>114</sup> The crime rate in the Soundview area of the Bronx is not reducing, as gun violence has taken over the community. I further mentioned in my article an incident that occurred on July 17, 2011 as I was entering SVPC to attend the 8:00am morning service. I saw cops gathered at the intersection between Soundview Avenue and Lafayette Avenue, just a stone throw away from my church. There were two ambulances attending to a young man. The young man had been shot. He was “covered in blood”<sup>115</sup> as he was taken into the ambulance. Gang violence has also been frequent in the Soundview area of the Bronx. Recently, a lady, who used to attend the SVPC and her daughter were both shot by her daughter’s in-law. The 52 year old lady died instantly, while her daughter was still at the hospital in a critical condition as of the time I was writing this demonstration project. I have heard some women say that they cannot go home from Bible study when it gets close to 9.00pm due to violence in the community.

The Soundview community needs a well-organized outreach program that will involve members of the community, not only those who attend church. The organization of young adults’ community evangelism program, which I introduced to SVPC during

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<sup>114</sup> Sunday Etsekhume, “Conversation with God,” in “Change: Your Gospel Newspaper,” issue 09, nos 3, October 2011. The Newspaper was published locally, but now is an online Magazine at [www.changesoe.com](http://www.changesoe.com).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

my demonstration project, will be an avenue for us to bring back both young adults and adults to the church. The door of the church is always open for those who want to accept Christ for the first time, and to those who have not yet decided, we shall go to them, because if the mountain cannot go to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. It is just an adage.

### **Biblical, Spiritual and Theological Consequences**

What are the biblical, spiritual, and theological implications of the migration of young adults' from the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA)? The bible teaches that children be trained in "the ways of God and when he is old he will not depart from it" (proverb 22:6). The bible, especially the books of Wisdom, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Songs of Solomon teach wisdom and discipline (proverb 1:2-7). Jesus loves children. He encouraged children to come to him (mark 10:13-16).

### **Response**

As one could probably tell most scholarly academia based both inside and outside of their study reference books and quote from page to page without any hindrance on their quotation. But the aspect of spiritual formation or spiritual development may be lacking. Some leaders are so vested in the knowledge of the bible, but not vested in devotional knowledge of the church. Careful study of some church devotional could testify to this claim. Some leaders study the Bible from "an academic perspective."<sup>116</sup> The Bible study in the SVPC has eventually led some members away from the Wednesday bible study. Unfortunately, such members wouldn't say why they left. There

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<sup>116</sup> Drew Dyck, 114.

is a spiritual vacuum in comparative to the Wednesday program, which is similar to the Sunday school program. However, Jesus Christ has power that appeal with most young adults' members. The book of proverbs is based upon life experience and the conduct of life.

### **Definition of Proverbs**

According to Ernest C. Lucas, the biblical Hebrew proverb is “a reflection on life crystallized in brief, memorable sentence.”<sup>117</sup> Proverbs are words that can be used anytime, anywhere, in everyday usage. Sometimes, the speakers may not know that he has used proverbs in speaking. Culturally, proverbs are useful words or statements that can be used to settle quarrels and at the same time, may be used for scorning. The dictionary meaning of the word is that they are “short well-known sayings that express an obvious truth and often offers advice.”<sup>118</sup> Proverbs are brief statements or words from life experience, which give truthful, and present valuable insight about life.

The Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament is among the wisdom literature. According to Ernest C. Lucas, the wisdom literatures are “limited to Job, Proverb and Ecclesiastes.”<sup>119</sup> Although, all the books in the bible contain wise sayings, which can be attributed to wisdom, starting from the book of genesis to revelation, some scholars argue

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<sup>117</sup> Ernest C. Lucas. “Introduction” in *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Psalms & Wisdom Literature, Volume Three* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), xiv.

<sup>118</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999), s. v. “London.”

<sup>119</sup> Ernest C. Lucas, xiv.

that psalms and the Song of Songs are also part of the wisdom literature.<sup>120</sup> However, in this my analysis I will devote my focus on the book of proverbs.

The Book of Proverbs contains several wise readings, which are divided into sections and is written in poetic language. Poems are written in verse format. In regards to the book of Proverbs and its wise sayings, William MacDonald writes, “it is absolutely chock full of wise sayings on how to live a successful life from God’s viewpoint...it is a marvelous example of wisdom literature.”<sup>121</sup> The book contains voices of the elderly written down for future living. For example, “trust in the lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5, NetB). In order to live godly and holy lives we must trust god and commit ourselves, spirit, soul and body to god, who made all thing possible. This will give us grace for salvation. We must trust him with the direction of our lives, and not rely on our own understanding. We must not rely on our own effort, but look up to him from whence come our help. Such are the wise sayings in the book of Proverbs.

### **Introduction and Authorship**

The introduction of the book of Proverbs can be found in the opening of the book itself, 1:1-7.

It set the general historical context for the instruction in wisdom, outlines the purposes and goals of the teachings contained in the collections of wise sayings and provides certain interpretive principles, and introduces the major theme of biblical wisdom literature.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> William MacDonald. “Introduction to the Poetical Books” in Believer’s Bible Commentary: A Complete Bible Commentary in One Volume (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 507.

<sup>122</sup>Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton. “Structure and Organization” in A Survey of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zonderan Publishing House, 1991), 288.

The book started with the introduction of the author of the book, the “proverbs of Solomon, son of David, the King of Israel” (Proverb 1:1). Solomon reign as the King of Israel after the death of David his father (1 Kings 1:33-35, NetB). Although, there is controversy about the date of the book, some scholars believe that the collections of the book started around 700 B.C., but Solomon original contribution was around 900’s B.C.<sup>123</sup> Solomon was said to have written about 3000 proverbs, but only some hundred plus are in the scripture.<sup>124</sup> The purpose of the book is to provide wisdom for living and for management of life<sup>125</sup> and for instruction, it contains positive and negative commands,<sup>126</sup> for instance, “death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love its use will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21, NetB). It is good that words are used wisely. At times, it is necessary to used words as a reproof, however, when words are used for slander it can be dangerous. Proverbs’ wisdom is instructional. It can be taught and passed from one generation to another. Proverbs are brief statements, which “expresses an obvious truth and often offers advice.”<sup>127</sup> The fact of the matter is that proverbs like adages can also be used figuratively to express one’s own concern. For example, “inclines your ear and hear the words of the wise” (22:17). It may be possible that the person giving the advice may not be perfect or may want to lead one astray. That

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<sup>123</sup> William MacDonald, 788.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 792.

<sup>126</sup> Ernest C. Lucas, 92.

<sup>127</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999), s. v. “London.”



is why when processing a proverb one must understand the statement from God's viewpoint. I have seen so many people use proverbs to victimize other people, but present themselves as a perfect being. For instance, a man who denied his worker the privilege of getting higher education said to his worker, "trust in God, do not rely on your own understanding." The employer denied the worker his educational leave of absence, and uses proverbs to curtail his points. The person listening to such proverbs must discern true proverbs from what I called implicative proverbs. A drug dealer may also use "incline your ear and hear the words of the wise," just to persuade the victim to yield to his voice. The purpose of the book of Proverbs is to learn, obey and to apply the instruction of the Lord to one's life.

### **Theme of the Book of Proverbs**

The major theme of the book of Proverbs is the "wisdom" and "fear of the Lord."<sup>128</sup> This theme is embedded in the entire book of the bible. For example, the genesis experience (genesis 3), Mount Sinai covenant (Exod. 14:10, 31; 20:18-20), and Saul's experience (Acts 9:4). "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the lord and acknowledging the Holy Spirit understanding" (Proverb 9:10, NetB). The only way to gain wisdom, knowledge and understanding is to trust God and put all hope in God, because true wisdom comes from God. James in the book of James wrote about lack of wisdom and God, who gives infinite wisdom generously without scorning, but faith must be the backbone of all wisdom. It is certain that some people do lack wisdom, either in understanding what they've read, what other people say to them or in comprehending

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<sup>128</sup>Andrew E. hill and John H. Walton, 289.

bible teaching. Dan G. McCartney wrote that “wisdom, generally speaking, is skill at life, particularly the ability to make sound judgment and speak the right words.”<sup>129</sup> It takes a lot to be skillful in judgment. King Solomon asked for wisdom from god to rule the people of Israel (1 kings 3:9). Even, academically, it takes many courses, tests and examinations before one can be a judge. However, there are other themes too that can be contradictory to true godly living, for example “the liar” (proverbs 6:16-17), “the whisperer” (Proverbs 16:28), “the gossip” (Proverbs 11:13), “the flatterer” (Proverbs 26:28) and “the scoffer” (Proverbs 21:24).<sup>130</sup> All these are associated with negative thoughts and ideas.

### **The Structure and Organization of the Book of Proverbs**

According to hill and Walton, the book is divided into three major divisions; “the discourse material (1-9), the collections of Proverbs (10-29) and the Massaite appendices (30-31).”<sup>131</sup> The Book of Proverbs is written in Hebrew poetry; probably for easy memorization.

### **Analysis of Proverbs 22:6**

“Train a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6, NetB). The book of proverbs is a “collections of wise saying”<sup>132</sup> or a Book of Wisdom. King Solomon, who is the author of the book, is attested to be

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<sup>129</sup> Dan G. McCartney. “Faith and Wisdom (1:2-8)” in *James: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009), 88.

<sup>130</sup> Ernest C. Lucas, 92.

<sup>131</sup> Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, 289.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 286.

knowledgeable and the knowledge impacted also attested to his literary skill.<sup>133</sup> King Solomon message in proverbs does intended that “wisdom can be taught and be passed on from generation to the next,”<sup>134</sup> but it is very important for “young people to listen, receive and obeying the teaching.”<sup>135</sup> The book of proverbs also teaches that “the fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy one is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10, NetB). the Sunday school and other Bible study are the only ways for young people to gain knowledge of the Bible and wisdom, that will create in them a renewed heart and a right spirit, however, in order for them to understand that the pastor or the preacher is not a perfect person, they will have to “listen, receive and obey” the teaching of the bible, not the Sunday school teachers. For young adults to be trained properly, so that their lives will be better in the future, training must first start at home. Kara Powell and Chap Clark also testified to the fact that “charity begins at home.” the two authors stated that “building sticky faith doesn’t start when your kids are seniors, or even juniors. The reality is that your kids’ faith trajectories are formed long before twelfth grade.”<sup>136</sup> This is a fascinating expression of the route to faith. Parental involvements in their children religious lives start at home. If parents are not regular church attendees, the children will also not regularly attend. In order to build the faith of children, children will have to hear the word at a very tender age, because “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). I am also praying

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 288.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Kara E. Powell and Chap Clark, 26.

for my son who will be eleven years old who now he plays the drum for the church, to listen to the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Sunday school, so that he will benefit from the teaching. However, train or teach a child, not only in the Sunday school, but Solomon advocates a better way for the upbringing of a child, so that he may better serve society.

### **The Consequences**

There is a saying, “the more you look the less you will see.” I don’t know where this adage sprang from, but since I was a little child, I heard my brother say it. It probably, it started from the magical world. This adage is true of the BPCs. The magnificent building in which the churches reside is what people see outside, but the inside is hollow-way. Not expanding, means standing still, like an ocean which has no source, so when the sun came up, the ocean lost strength and dried out. The BPCs is still standing right, but it may be gradually losing its strength, because the young adults age 18-19 are migrating to other churches and some out into the world. The adult congregation may be winning right now but in the near future if the church is not winning the next generation back for Christ,<sup>137</sup> we can bid the church adieu. Several reasons can be suggested as to why the church may be implicated with solutions to counter the consequences, but I will mention two reasons.

### **Discipleship**

Is the church failing at discipleship? Or is it failing at conversion? Or is it failing to understand Jesus Christ? It suffices me to know that none of the above question should apply to the BPCs, because I can testify that the BPCs like any other church understand

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<sup>137</sup> Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III, 16.

the implication of saying yes to this question. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14, NetB). It is as simple as saying; “A B C” Jesus Christ has given the children an open invitation to come to him. Who can stop them? Jesus disciples tried to stop them, but Jesus was angry at them. So the church must not stop young adults 18-19 from coming to Jesus Christ. According to Bishop Claude E. Payne and Hamilton Beazley definition of evangelism, “evangelism is the process of making (not the event of announcing new members), and it informs all activities of the church.”<sup>138</sup> Evangelism come before conversion, which the act of changing or transforming or altering the nature of somebody to another form. Conversion comes before disciple, which is the follower of Christ. This entire process, backed by the power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is the responsibility of the church. The conversion of Saul who is now Paul (Acts 9) was a significant milestone in the history of Christianity. Saul was a man who was very antagonistic to Christianity and even despised Jesus Christ, but he also carried the same cross for the same Jesus Christ till he died. My appeal to the church is that if Saul can be converted so many other people can also be converted.

If the young adult are unjustly excluded from meeting Jesus Christ when he calls them to himself, it means spiritually denying them from meeting their savior, but the greater sin is upon the church, who spiritually will not enter the kingdom of god; because Jesus said, “for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” the kingdom of heaven belongs to children, so if anyone or the BPCs will merit heaven, they must have to accept

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<sup>138</sup> Bishop Claude E. Payne and Hamilton Beazley. *Reclaiming the Great Commission: A Practical Model for Transforming Denominations and Congregations* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass), 124.

young adults and also humble themselves and be purified as children. However, the young adults will have to bend their head to reverence God and the adults who pave the way for their coming to earth.

## **Worship**

How is God going to accept worship if young adults are ignored during worship? For there to be perfect worship, you must “love the lord your god with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30, NetB). God gave us a responsibility, which is to love him with all what he has given us, not excluding young adults. “Worship is to treat somebody as divine and show respect by engaging in acts of prayer and devotion.”<sup>139</sup> God is the ultimate; he created the universe and gave us grace of salvation, so he deserves to be worshipped; both young and old are to worship God (Exodus 20:1-7; Deuteronomy 6:5). The SVPC is said to be an adult oriented church, it is not a model for young people. The average age of the adult choir is 60 years old. The young adult choir is currently non-existent and young people label the adults as not loving and not caring. This may be one of the reasons why young people are not getting support from the adults and why both groups are not motivated to unite to continue the young adults’ choir. What this means is that the church is gradually fading away and dying. Without reverting its decisions to seek or to evangelize young people the church may eventually end up dying.

In view of the above reaction from young people, American adults and young adults’ are now divided about young people leaving church. Some adults consciously never seem to be bothered with young adults’ leaving church and have negative views on

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<sup>139</sup> *Encarta English Dictionary* (1999), s. v. “London.”

the issue because this is not the first time. However, researchers like Barna Group, Drew Dyck and Rainer and Rainer III are very much concerned with young adults leaving church and strive to find solution to ending the epidemic. Spiritually, the young people in SVPC are striving for shifting values. Apostle Paul advice to Timothy is to not let people look down on him, because he is young (1 Timothy 4:12). Paul in the same statement said for him to set good example to believers in his “speech, conduct, love, faithfulness and purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). Although, young adults are advocating for a shift in values, they also have to present their conduct in approachable ways that will make older adults love and care for them; they must not be disrespectful.

Conclusively, it can be noted that BPCs will suffer spiritual consequences if they ignore young adults’ age 18-19 migration from the church. There may not be continuity as a result of the migration, so the church must strive to retain those that are still in the church and evangelize more to those who have already left and to the “unchurched.”

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **HOW TO REVISE THE TREND**

#### **Challenge Statement**

As Associate Minister of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), Sound View, Bronx, New York, I've noticed the mass migration of young adults; 18-19 from the Bronx Presbyterian Church (USA); the attendance rate has dropped almost 70%. Ignoring this issue will lead to the death of the church. This demonstration project will create an educational process that will engage and encourage the young adults to become more involved in the life of the church.

#### **Plan of Implementation**

The plan of implementation illustrates the design, which is the aim intended, the process of implementing the plan, which we found in the procedure, and the evaluations of the plan from various segments of the church.

#### **Design, Procedure and Assessment**

##### **Goal and Strategies**

**Goal 1:** Awareness Raising: raise the awareness of Bronx Presbyterian Churches, because lack of youth in the church will lead to death of the churches. This will help raise the consciousness of church members to the problems of church youth migration, which



will enable me to measure benchmark success in achieving<sup>140</sup> goals of preventing the youngsters from further migration.<sup>141</sup>

**Strategy 1:** Visitation to other churches. Between April 1, 2012 and April 29, 2012, I with Elder Mayphil Whyte and a member of Sound View Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry shall visit two non-Presbyterian Churches in the Bronx; The Church of Revelation and the United Church of Jesus Christ. We shall also visit the Brick Presbyterian Church (USA) in New York, New York. This will give us the opportunity to see the different youth programs these churches have and observe young adult participation and performance in their various church programs; for example, their involvement in leadership, mid-week programs.

**Strategy 2:** In-Church Public Relations (PR). This Public Relations campaign will help manipulate and lobby church leaders to shape all messages delivered by the young adults' from an organizational<sup>142</sup> point of view or otherwise, conveying the ideas of the demonstration project and drawing attention towards the problems of migration of youngsters from the congregations. The purpose of the PR is also to give voice to the church leadership and to maximize the effect of the project, which may be echoed throughout every aspect of the church and for the churches to enjoy its impact. One way

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<sup>140</sup> Site Team, "Creating Awareness," member of my Site Team in the proposal of my Demonstration Project for the Doctor of Ministry Program (New York Theological Seminary Mentor and Research Development, on May 26, 2011).

<sup>141</sup> Christine Barney, *Developing Public Relations Campaigns: Top PR Experts on Implementing a PR Plan Benchmarking Success, and Achieving Client Goals* (Boston, Massachusetts: Aspatore Books, 2007), preface.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

to do this is to “get intimately familiar to everyone;”<sup>143</sup> including the church and its leaders, because the people have the greatest knowledge of the organization and also have the greatest abilities to effect change or transformation. Elder Mayphil Whyte, Kadeem Marulaz, the President of the Youth Ministry, and I will be involved in this exercise. This exercise is an ongoing process.

**Strategy 3:** Conduct conferences. Invite young adults, between ages 18 and 19, from the Bronx Presbyterian Churches to a conference, lasting roughly one hour, with the aim of knowing and addressing their needs. Human needs are “central element in everyday psychology.”<sup>144</sup> Needs are very important, because everyone has them. However, identifying individual needs may be “elusive.”<sup>145</sup> The area of needs may be in the concentration of the “basic qualities,”<sup>146</sup> which strong and healthy congregations should share. These basic qualities are “grace, strengths, compassion, excellent sprinters, and act swiftly;” which may also be the latent strength of the organization.<sup>147</sup> By determining the causes of young adult migration from church, meeting their needs, and classifying them into appropriate categories, making use of the right talent for the right course, an atmosphere will be created that will allow youth to express themselves without fear or

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<sup>143</sup> Christine Barney, Preface.

<sup>144</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Deal, Terrence E., *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, choice, and Leadership*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Imprint, 2008), 122.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Kennon L. Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church: Strong, Healthy Congregations Living in the Grace of God*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 5.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

intimidation and will enable one to understand their needs. Pastor Francis Inofomoh will conduct the Conference on May 5, 2012.

**Strategy 4:** Seminars and Sermons. Rev. Sonja West will conduct one seminar on May 19 and I will deliver a sermon on May 27, 2012 that will focus on the importance of young adults in the church and how to engage and involve them in the church activities and programs. The lectures will be focused primarily on “constructive motivations” and the church motivational tracts; who is involved, why they are involved, how they are involved, and what are the peculiar characteristics found in them.

**Evaluation of Goal 1:** Complete assessment of the plans and success of goal 1 and the strategies explored, a clear observation and detailed account of each of the strategies will be recorded, reflecting participants’ and positive and negative responses of the participants. Compilation of accurate data will also enable me to track the success of the project.<sup>148</sup> This data will be gathered from the various age brackets within the PCS and the 18-19 ages group within the PC vis-à-vis other non-PC.<sup>149</sup> Another important point of evaluation that can add weight to the project is to ensure that all the participants are within the same age range;<sup>150</sup> 18-19 years old, which indicates that the responses are directly from the age group in question. However, 75% of the participants will complete pre and post questionnaires to indicate the success of their responses.

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<sup>148</sup> Howard M. Guttman, *Coach Yourself to Win: Seven Steps to Breakthrough Performance on the Job and in Your Life* (San Francisco, California: McGraw Hill, 2011), 124.

<sup>149</sup> Floyd J. Fowler, “Introduction” in *Survey Research Method (Applied Social Research Methods, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Thousand Oak, California: Sage Publication, Inc., 2008), 3-6.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

**Goal 2:** Building a Team. Teamwork is a “cooperative work by a group.”<sup>151</sup> The goal is to prevention further migration of young adults in the Bronx Presbyterian Churches

**Strategy 1:** Involving the Site Team and some of Elders, Deacons and some member of the Youth Ministry in a small group. This strategy is to ensure that the Elders, Deacons and the members of the Youth will work with me to have a part in developing the share vision and common goal of the Demonstration Project. This strategy will also accommodate each individual idea and incorporate them to all participant expectation for the project. The aspect of building a team or “group intervention” is called the “human relations laboratories.”<sup>152</sup> This also means that all participants share a common goal for the interest of the projects.

**Strategy 2:** Define Member Role and Responsibility. This will enable the member to demonstrate their collaboration and carefully plan how they can contribute meaningfully to the success of the project. In defining the role and responsibility, members will be informed of the duration of the project.

**Strategy 3:** Involve All Members in Project Activity. Members will be notified of any deliberate concerns of the project. Meeting will also be scheduled at the members’ convenience, so that all communication and decision will be made through consensus.

**Strategy 4:** Acknowledgment and Reward for all Members. All team members’ individual efforts contributing towards the project will be rewarded. The member will be encouraged to share their individual idea to the benefit of the project.

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<sup>151</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999), s. v. “London.”

<sup>152</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, 162.

**Evaluation for Goal 2:** Efforts of the Site Team members and the Team work will be evaluated at least by 75% of the Site Team members during the duration of the Demonstration Project. Response will be received from the team performance from about four members of the site team.

**Goal 3:** The Team Create the Educational Process. Before beginning to deal with the issue of change in our church system, the site team will develop a proposal that will engage the young adults' and prevent further migration.<sup>153</sup> The team will examine the current operating system in the church and build an effective model which truly integrates the church educational, school and the home educational system.

**Strategy 1:** The Team will anticipate increased participation of the Christian Education Committee members, the Youth Ministry, and other areas of the church and community.

Data Compilation/Computation: Preliminary and pertinent findings will include the advancement made during the research process and data compilation, gathered during the research to support the proposal. "Performance data" will be a valuable planning and control system, because it "measures and motivates, particularly when targets are reasonably clear and measurable."<sup>154</sup> This is so important, because the Christian Education Committee and the Youth Ministry are the core target of the basis of the project.

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<sup>153</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, "integrating Frames for Effective Practice," in "Across Frames: Organizations as multiple Realities," and in "Four Interpretations of Organizational Process," under "Goal Setting," Bolman and Deal gave the process that will "keep organizations headed in the right direction," and also write about one of such proposal under the "Human Resources Frame," to keep people involved and communication open," 307.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 52.

**Strategy 2:** Research Design and Methods. The Team will also encourage the Christian Education Committee and the Youth Ministry to reach out to visitors and find ways to involve them immediately in the church program through social networking, fun and fellowship and engage them in volunteer opportunities. The Team will also collaborate with young adults in the churches to inquire the best ways to involve and engage them in the church services and programs with pastors, leaders and congregations to inquire the best ways to involve and engage young adults' in church services and programs and communicate strategies that will support the workability of the proposal.

**Strategy 3:** The Team will Propose Action Plan. Research, survey, and propose a series of programs and projects that will encourage the young adults' full participation in their churches and also innovations that may convince church leaders of the benefits of the project. For instance; the young adults' should be fully involved in the choir on a regular basis as opposed to once a month or on special occasions, young adults will participate in Sunday school, Bible studies and other related educational programs, and the young adults should have an indoor and outdoor play area.

**Strategy 4:** The Team will Identify and propose a pilot program. This program will serve as a prototype of what is being articulated in the demonstration project and will include a component by which to enable participating churches to evaluate the success of the project. The church will be encouraged to create activities to reach out to the Soundview community through welcoming activities open to friends, members, and potential visitors. Teachers will be encouraged among the congregation to volunteer to teach in the different classes that constitute the educational program. This will be done by

encouraging the pastors and church leaders to involve the young adults in all the church programs on a regular basis rather than on a monthly basis or solely on special occasion.

**Evaluation for Goal 3:** The evaluation will be done by critically looking at the team participation, feedback from the pastor, Christian Educational Committee members, the Youth Ministry and other church leaders and congregation. To be sure that the objective of the project is realized, the majority of the participants must indicate their approval at a rate of at least 75%.

**Goal 4:** Implementation of the Process. The strategic planning of the proposed project, if concrete steps are not taken to execute the plan, will be of little use. It is in the implementation that we begin to see the long-term, systematic impact of change.

**Strategy 1:** Research and Survey. The first aspect of this strategy is to know by numbers the remnant of the young adults in this sample group in the churches; their level of participation and the reason they have chosen to stay in the church. Quantitative research, use of questionnaires, personal interviews, graphs and charts will be used to gather information; as this “Quantitative research can also be used to measure attitude, satisfaction, commitment and a range of other useful [parameters] that can track over time and used as part of a wider business planning and business strategy process.”<sup>155</sup> A survey of randomly selected churches, their pastors/leaders and young adults will be conducted. I will also explore the service of the young adults’ and youth leaders in my church as well as some of the other churches that will be engaged in the process of the research, conferences, interview and data compilation. Comparison will also be done

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<sup>155</sup> “Market Research for Decision Maker,” “Quantitative Research,” [www.dobney.com](http://www.dobney.com) (accessed on November 20, 2011).

between the Sound View Presbyterian Church, some of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches and some non-Presbyterian Churches to get an idea of what is luring the young adults' away as a way of examining and evaluating the measures that are luring the young adults' away from the Bronx Presbyterian Churches and to non-Presbyterian churches.

**Strategy 2:** *Genogram*<sup>156</sup> of the churches. *Genogram* is a systemic approach that will be used to examine the history and explore "how the congregations have functioned since [their] inception."<sup>157</sup> It is also a way of looking at the historical background of the churches; the relationship between the pastors and his or her workers/leaders; the congregations and members, especially their communication style or models and leader's accountability; and any other systems of accountability. The idea is to see if there has been a change in the pastors' relationship with their leaders and the young adults and if this change has been responsible for the young adults' migration.<sup>158</sup>

**Strategy 3:** Library Research. Books, articles, periodicals, computer research and other related materials will also be a source of this research projects. This will also aid me in analyzing the various discoveries that will be made and support the recommendations that will subsequently follow.

**Strategy 4:** Show Movies. These criteria will motivate and allow the young adults to fully participate in the project; having acquired knowledge about the dangers posed to the churches of migration after seeing the movies. These Christian movies will allow the

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<sup>156</sup> Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A System Approach* (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, Inc., 2006); 38.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Site Team.



young adults to see the importance of them staying in the church as opposed to them not staying in the church.

**Evaluation for Goal 4:** The knowledge, by examination of the roles played by the pastors, leaders and the congregations<sup>159</sup> on the migration of the young adults' will also be educative in the evaluation. Drew Dyck, writing not to discard the reasons for young adults leaving the faith, stated that;

Some have overstated the case against the church, pinning the full responsibility of the trend on Christian hypocrisy and flawed ministry approaches. While I'm wary of such categorical condemnations, this one contains at least a kernel of truth. And where we've been part of the problem, we must acknowledge our complicity.<sup>160</sup>

The church has to be cautious of its role in the migration of the young adults. In order to devise a better recommendation that could assist the churches in utilizing the skills of the young adults', which as well will prevent further migration. The church leadership knowledge or awareness on the issue of young adults will be examined. Obviously, due to other responsibilities, some leaders may be ignorant of the movement of the young adults in their congregations. However, the response of leaders to conditions makes a leader, not the condition itself. Church leaders must at all times include young adults in their agendas. In "Agenda Settings," Bolman and Deal, stated that "the first step in effective political leadership is setting an agenda."<sup>161</sup> The questions that may buttress this point further are, Are the church leaders interested in the participation of the young adults' or their own selfish interest at the expense of the young adults? How are they

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<sup>159</sup> Drew Dyck, "Give them a Cause!" 148.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Bolman Lee G., and Deal Terrence E., "Political Skills," 205.

managing the young adults in their respective churches? Prioritizing the migration of young adults from the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), will be to include the issue of the young adults in their Sessions agendas, because “effective leader creates an agenda for change with two major elements: a vision balancing the long-term interests of the key parties and a strategy for achieving the vision, recognizing competing internal and external forces.”<sup>162</sup> While the agenda is aimed at “change” or transformation, the concern for the young adults as a “major stakeholder”<sup>163</sup> in the church, must be address to also impart the young adults themselves.

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<sup>162</sup> Bolman Lee G., and Deal Terrence E., “Political Skills,” 205.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE PROJECT DESCRIBED**

#### **Goal and strategies**

#### **Results**

#### **Awareness Raising:**

On Sunday, June 24, 2012, as part of my Goal 1 and Strategy 1, which was “Awareness Raising,” I visited three churches in the Bronx; the Featherbed Lane Presbyterian Church (USA), University Height Presbyterian Church (USA) and Christ Apostolic Church Living Hope Chapel. However, other members of the site team were unable to go with me to the churches Blessing Etsekhume went with me to Christ Apostolic Church Living Hope Chapel. A flyer and an invitation card were created just for the purpose of inviting the various churches to participate in the demonstration project, (see Appendix B for flyer and Appendix C for invitation).

The three Pastors; Pastor Brenda Perry of University PC., Rev. Lonnie H. Bryant of Featherbed Lane P.C., and Pastor Oladubu of C. A. C. Living Hope Chapel embraces the project and wish to announced the Save the Date in their churches and to place both the flyer and the invitation on their church notice board, while we were at C. A. C. Living Hope chapel, Pastor Oladubu announced the Save the Date to his congregation and the youth leader, Deaconess Edemanwan Okon was told to keep the date in mind. They three Pastors accepted the flyer and invitation that was made for the seminar and conference, title: “Youth/Young Adults Speak Out: Embracing the Future Generation of Young

Presbyterians.” Some member of Christ Apostolic Church Living Hope Chapel attended both the seminar and the conference. Rev Bryant in collaboration with working with me on the project also proposed forming a Basketball Team for the young adults in the Bronx Presbyterian Churches.

However, Rev. Bryant continuous call is a motivation to the success of the project, we spoke on the phone several times, even when he was about travelling out of New York, we spoke concerning the young people. He said to me “This is a very good project for our children.” He even gave me some form to give to my Pastor, Cleotha Robertson for the planning of the young adults’ basket team for Bronx Presbyterian Churches. Unfortunately Rev. Bryant and his church could not attend both the seminar and the conference; he called to apologize for not able to attend the program.

Fortunately, the University Height P.C. young adults had their Youth Service on June 24, 2012. Pastor Perry had always contributed towards the success of this Project. At one of my encounter with Pastor Perry, where we discussed the young adults’ migration problems, Pastor Perry stated that lack of “networking and fellowshiping” are some of the problems of young adults migrating from the Bronx Presbyterian Churches. While I was at University Height P. C., the youth and young adults were involved in the service; they read the scripture from the Bible, the young adults’ choir officiates in the service, a young adult was playing the drum. Apart from Pastor Perry officiating, the choir master or musician played the organ, the adults Usher combine with the young adults Ushers, the Word was given by a young adult. To buttress Pastor Perry support for the project and her awareness raising, she follow up by continuously announcing the program in her church.

Although, Pastor Perry did not attend the seminar on July 21, 2012, but she attended the conference on August 18, 2012. She was also one of the presenters at the conference. In her presentation she enjoined the youth and young adults to emulate those people in the Bible that started their ministry as youth; such as David, Timothy, Mary (the mother of Jesus) and Joseph from the Old Testament. Unfortunately, like the Pastor of University Heights P.C. and Feathered Lane P.C., who exercise their support for the project, other Pastors and leaders who were also given the flyers and invitation, when they visited Sound View P.C. for the Bronx Presbyterian Churches 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Worship Service on Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2012, some flyer and invitation were also sent to them by mail.

**Strategy1:** Visitation to other churches: On July 29, 2012, some member of the site team visited Christ Apostolic Church on 112<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan, where Pastor Timothy Adelani, is the Pastor in-charge; to observe the young adults participation and performance in the church service and program. The Pastor confirmed the receipt of the flyer and invitation, which we sent to his church, unfortunately none of the young adults in C.A.C. Manhattan attended the seminar and conference, with exception of Ms. Elizabeth Ajayi, who is a friend to one of the site members. We observed that most of the young adults in the Manhattan church were between ages 18 and 24 years. They were all involved in the Sunday Service. Some were playing the drum, some were playing the Koga, some were taken photograph, some were in the Usher and some were videoing the service and programs. However, the young adults were supervised by Mr. Kehinde Babatunde, an adult member of the church, who was also the coordinator of music ministry.

**Strategy 2: In-Church Public Relations (PR):** As part of the strategy 2 of this project which is In-Church Public Relations (PR); which is also a Public Relations campaign in Sound View Presbyterian Church. The site team members, with majority of them as members of Sound View Presbyterian church, act as lobbyist, trying to manipulate and lobby church leaders to vouch their consent and support for the demonstration project. Part of the plan was to get Pastor Cleotha Robertson involved as a site team member. Pastor Robertson demonstrated his support for the project by his constant announcement of the project. Once Pastor Robertson was aware of the idea of the project, which is trying to get the young adults to stay in the church, he gave what he called, his “maximum support for the project.” It was a blessing getting Pastor Robertson involved in the project, because some of church leaders, even though they were adamant, gave their support for the project, by attending the seminar and the conference and volunteered to donate some sodas and food for seminar and conference. Pastor Robertson influence on the church leaders made it very easy for the public relation campaign to be effective. Based on this strategy, Pastor Robertson has invigorated the Movies Night, which was somehow abandoned in the church. The youth ministry and some church leaders on every last Friday of the month gathered together to watch movies. On Friday, July 27, 2012 the movie show was titled “The Joyful Noise.” Starring Queen Latifah, Dolly Parton and Directed by Todd Graff. To further promote and aid the DP, the site team contacted the various committees in the church and their chairperson. These are the committees at Sound View Presbyterian Church: Christian Education, Music and Worship, Budget and Finance, Evangelism and Outreach, Personnel and Policy, Fundraising, Membership/Stewardship, the Board of Trustee, the Board of Deacon and Anniversary.

Elder Mayphil Whyte, the coordinator of the youth ministry and Kadeem Marulaz, the president of the youth ministry were the lobbyist in the youth ministry, while Deaconess Blessing Etsekhume lobby the Deacon and Pastor Robertson and I influenced the Session and the Board of Trustees for their committees' participation in the project. Although the Men Club, which is an association of men, play an important role in the church, they are not recognize as a committee of the church, yet they sent (Deacon Victor Colon) as their representative. The purpose of In-Church Public Relations (PR) is also to create awareness within each board and committee and to also convey the ideas of the project; in order to draw their attention towards the problems of the migration of the youngsters from Sound View PC. Flyer and invitation were given to each committees and boards. The site team and I were able to pinpoint the area of functionality of the young adults in the church that were also lacking in our church. The young adults were not functioning in such area of young adults choir, which has been abandoned for about seven – eight month, the young adults Sunday school has not been functioning, due to lack of committed student, while the teacher are always there, willing to teach.

Speaking to Elder Barbara Finney, a Sunday school teacher, on Sunday, November 25, 2012, she said that she waited for the children to come to the Sunday school class, “but none of them came today. I notice her emotional outburst; she also said “I wonder why they did not come to class!” It is not new to see the young people skip Sunday school, but what is making them ignore the teaching of Jesus Christ is what I don't understand. Long time ago, at a meeting, I suggested to the Christian Education Committee, that in order to make the Sunday school an interesting thing for our young people, we should start providing breakfast for the students. Although, the committee

welcomes the suggestion, the suggestion was ignored. Since then nothing has been done to that effect. Barbara Finney advised that one way to get the children to come to Sunday school is to get their parents involved, because if their parents come to church, the children will also come with them. Annie Burroughs, a former member of the deacon Board, in an interview, which I had with her, on Sunday, December 9, 2012 after the 11.00am service also reiterated the idea. She said “if their parents are not coming, they will not come also.” Cathy Lynn Grossman in USA Today confirmed Ms. Barbara Finney and Annie Burroughs statements in “Young adults aren’t sticking with church.”<sup>164</sup> Grossman writes, “The survey found that those who stayed with or returned to church grew up with both parents committed to the church.”<sup>165</sup> The present and commitments of parents in church may be a yardstick for their children to come to church. In “Teens getting less involved in church groups, research shows”<sup>166</sup> by Cathy Lynn Grossman and Stephanie Steinberg, Jeremy Johnston, the executive pastor at the First Family Church in Overland Park, Kansas, also supported the idea that parents has to go to church with their children. Pastor Jeremy Johnston said, “I blame the parents, “who didn’t grow up in a church culture.”<sup>167</sup> However, one of the stumbling blocks is that once the child has reached the age of decision making, their parents no longer has any control over them.

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<sup>164</sup> Grossman, Cathy Lynn, “Young adults aren’t sticking with church,” USA Today; 08/07/2007, Academic Search Premier, Issn: 07347456; no JOE395359098907.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Cathy Lynn Grossman and Stephanie Steinberg, “Teens getting less involved in church groups, research shows” USA Today; 08/11/2010, Academic Search Premier, Issn: 07347456; JOE011896465210.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.



Rev. Sonja West, while presenting her lecture at the seminar on July 21, 2012 also represent her argument with some statistics from various research and survey results carried out by various research group concerning young adults. All the researched done by various research groups, including the Barna Group, the Southern Baptist Convention's Family Life Council, the Rainer Research, Robert Putnam and David Campbell and the Seven Day Adventist, all point to the serious issues of young adults leaving the church. For instance, Southern Baptist Convention Family Life Council conducted a survey in 2002; about 82% of youth leave the church within one year of high school graduation. According to the Assembly of God survey, 66% of young adults left their denomination one year of high school graduation; and Rainer Research, a consulting firm, through "Lifeway Research" also found out that 70% of young adults between ages 18 and 22 leave the church.

In another research done to monitor young adults leaving the church, Robert Putnam and David Campbell presented the research from their book, *American Grace*, at a "Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life held in 2009" that "young Americans are dropping out of religion at an alarming rate of five to six times the historical rate; 30 to 40 percent have no religion today, versus 5 to 10 percent a generation ago." Still on the researches and surveys, according to the Seventh Day Adventist Church, 40-50% of North American teens would leave the church by their mid-twenties, a figure that may be higher; and Barna Group in a book, title *unchristian*, about 61% of young adults who were active in church services and that were also engaged, but spiritually were disengaged, meaning that they were no longer active in church services, no longer reading the Bible and no longer praying. Accordingly, 20% maintained their level of

spiritually which they had in high school and 20% were never reached by a community of faith during their teenage years, as a result they remain disconnected from the church.<sup>168</sup>

Barna Group between 2007 and 2011 conducted another research, which findings were indicated in the book, *You Lost Me*. The main target of the research was 18 to 29 year olds, who were active in Christian church during their teen years, but 59% young adults who had a Christian background had stopped attending church, after been regular at the church service during their teen, 57% is less active today than when they were in their 15, 40% now started doubting their faith and 32% felt they are now rejecting their parents' faith. There is a continuous trend in young adults' exodus. The results of the various surveys also show that the young adults can no longer be manipulated by the adults or their parents, who once had control over their going with them to church. Why is this so significant? The "American Jurisprudence"<sup>169</sup> defined

the emancipated child, as one who has the ability to provide for his own care, support and maintenance. Additionally, the child's parents have freely and voluntarily elected to allow him to establish a home of his own and to use his earning as he sees fit.<sup>170</sup>

For instance, the South Carolina Laws regarding the emancipation of minors, indicates that the parents obligation to support their child extend to age 18.<sup>171</sup> While the legal age

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<sup>168</sup> Sonja west, Site Team.

<sup>169</sup> Perry, Charles, "What Are South Carolina Laws Regarding the Emancipation Minors?" [www.ehow.com](http://www.ehow.com) (accessed on 11/29/12).

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

of emancipation in the State of Maryland is lower from 21 to 18 years, in 1973,<sup>172</sup> the New York State has the legal age as 21 years.<sup>173</sup> Besides, it is the decision of parents who have minors living with them to take their children to church to partake in the Sunday school; that is if the parents themselves are interested or committed, then they will be early to church. The lack of parental commitments to church or Sunday school, hinder their children, thereby deprived the children for gaining from the Sunday school. Some young adults claimed to be emancipated once they turn 18 years, but the irony is that some of the young people, who claimed to be adults still live with their parents. The mother of two young people in my church requested a continuous prayer for her and her two children, because “they are out of control.” According to her; the children do not want to listen to her and they like to dodge from their responsibilities at home. Although, their mother, who is a single parents has not “freely and voluntarily elected to allow [them] to establish a home” inside her home, but they tried as much as possible to supersede her decision; yet they are not emancipated. Precious, the former secretary of the Sound View PC Youth Ministry, whom I interviewed on December 1, 2012, on why she left Sound View PC? She stated that she left SVPC for another church, Cherubim and Seraphim (C & S), because “there were not a lot of young people in SVPC congregation and the services is been held by older people.” And she went on to say that “basically SVPC is not a model church for young people.” This is not an isolated case among parents and young adults, however the compassion of parents tend to allow the arrogance

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<sup>172</sup> Robert, Michael, “How to File for Emancipation in Maryland,” [www.ehow.com](http://www.ehow.com) (accessed on 11/29/12).

<sup>173</sup> Bryan Clark, “How to Get Legally Emancipated in New York State,” [www.ehow.com](http://www.ehow.com) (accessed 11/29/12).

of their minors. Although, the two kids' scenario cited above and Precious case is not a fully emancipated case, because they still live with their parents, even though they cannot care and support themselves, they hide under the canopy of the Law.

Kadeem Marulaz, the President of the Sound View Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry, though not a member of the site team, he was invited to speak on the Seminar. Kadeem spoke on "Bridging the Gap between Adults and Young Adults." The In-Church Public Relations paid off, because members of the committees and the board attended both the seminar and conference, however not all the members attended.

**Strategy 3:** Seminars and Sermons: In the plan of implementation, "conduct conference" was supposed to be before the seminar and sermons, but most of the presenters scheduled for the conference stated that they will not be in New York on August 18, 2012, which was the day scheduled for the conference. Therefore, the seminar was rescheduled to take place before the conference. On July 21, 2012, the Seminar commenced with the registration of participants and members of the site (see Appendix O for the Register). Then, fellowship and refreshments; follow with a devotion, led by Pastor Dr. Cleotha Robertson. The opening prayer was done by Pastor Francis Inofomoh, Rev. Sonja west and I did the opening remark. The moderators were Kadeem Marulaz, the president of the Sound View PC Young Ministry and Precious Etsekhume, the former Secretary of the youth ministry. An agenda was created for the seminar, with a list of the presenters and their topic; a folder was also created, which contains the hymn, the responsive reading, the feedback form (see Appendices D, F, G and I), the New York Theological Seminary Informal Consent Form for Final Doctoral Projects (see Appendix F), for those who did not have the opportunity to complete the form and the questionnaire (see Appendix D).

The questionnaire included both those of the seminar and the conference. About 29 people attended the seminar; including young adults between ages 13 to 25 years. Some adults that were interested in the Seminar also attended. However, the focus of the project was on young adults between ages 18 and 19 years, the young people present at the seminar were limited to the number anticipated.

As stated in the agenda for the seminar, my opening remark was the presentation of the challenge statement of the demonstration project through PowerPoint's presentation. After presenting the challenge statement, I also presented the aims of the seminar; that is:

- To create an educational process that will engage and encourage the young people to become more involved in the life of the church.
- To create a young Adults speak-out forum where young adults may be able to voice out their opinion about the Bronx Presbyterians Churches.
- To create a questionnaire where young people would best answer why they are leaving the church and why they are not leaving the church.

Using Sound View PC as the focus of the project and to further explain the reason for the project, I stated that to overlook the problems of the young adults leaving our churches, will be lack of continuation of the church, because after this present generation passed away, the young people who are supposed to continue the church will not be there. Therefore, I encouraged the young adults that were present to "Speak Out" their minds, so as to address the older folks present on how they can be encouraged to stay in the church.

## **The Analysis of Rev. Sonja West Presentation at the Seminar**

Rev. Sonja West, presentation was based on the title, “The Exodus of the Mosaic Generation: “Why Are Young Adults Leaving the Church?” Although, she had wanted to do a PowerPoint’s presentation, but the computer was down. At the time the computer was power on, she had already started her presentation. The reflection of her presentation was taken from some Articles and books, for example *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church...And Rethinking Faith* by David Kinnaman,<sup>174</sup> *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity*, by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons,<sup>175</sup> which is about the subject matter. The project and thesis seek to provide a comprehensive approach to the solution of why the Bronx Presbyterian Churches futures Leaders are migrating from the church? While the educational process is to start by the information already researched by scholars and groups that are concern on this issues of why young people are leaving church at a geometrical rate and like a never-ending stream. But the answer to the problem is not clear. According to Rev West, “we do not have the answers as to why the young adults are leaving the church, but we have come to listen and reflect on the issue.” The audience, some of whom sought way to eradicate the problem.

Several researches have been done to seek solution to this problem, yet the answers are not coming forth. For instance, according to David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyon’s survey, “most Americans, including two-thirds of all adult Mosaics and Busters

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<sup>174</sup> David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church...And Rethinking Faith* by David Kinnaman (Grand Rapid, Michigan: Baker Books, 2011), front cover.

<sup>175</sup> David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2007), 72.

(65 percent), tell us that they have made a commitment to Jesus Christ at some point in their life.”<sup>176</sup> The 65 percent also includes people born in 1984 to 2002. Although, the 65 percent is more than half of the interviewees, but more significantly is whether they are still in church or whether they are still committed to Jesus Christ as they once professed. This is a question about faith. Kinnaman and Lyons write that the country would be “revolutionized”<sup>177</sup> if many American; about 73 percent give their lives to Christ. For the country to be revolutionized, it will mean not just going to church, so that the number will be added up, it is by doing what Christ disciples did in Antioch, where they were first called Christians (Act 11:26).

Sometimes, it may be difficult to say, that the result of researches may be in number, while the actual practice may not be reflect the sample collected. The focus of most church is on conversion; how many people are converted today or how many are those who joined the church today, instead of the gradual process of conversion. Deacon Victor Colon, who also attended both the seminar and conference, has always frowned against the ideas that one should be a member of a church before he can be saved. In one of our conversation he said, “I hate the idea of calling people to join the church, instead of telling them to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, before they can be saved.” Popular among Victor references are Apostle Paul quotes, “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will saved (Roman 10:9) and “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will

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<sup>176</sup> David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, 72.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

be saved” (Romans 10:13). Although, Victor has his point, the main problem, which Victor failed to notice, is that by joining the church, small as it may be, members’ contributions toward the ministry is the brain behind the continued existence of the ministry. The church put in more effort on people joining the church rather than on making discipleship for Christ.

“Recent Barna Group research found that a majority of American youth raised in the church have left it by age 29.”<sup>178</sup> Although, in SVPC many people who are between these age categories left the church, those who are still in the community, once in a while show up in services. Robert Reid who had left the church before I came to SVPC in 2008, he is now back. When I asked him why he left the church; he said, “I was with someone then and the person was attending another church, so now that we have separated, I came back.” Robert did not leave the church because he was fed up with it, but he was attending another church.

Peer Pressure maybe a stumbling block in the passage of young people through adulthood. Pastor Cleotha Robertson during his presentation at the seminar stated that “Peer Pressure” is one of the struggles of young people. He said, “As an adult I still struggle with peer pressure.” Jay as Robert is popularly called went away from the church where he grew up to a friend church. I didn’t ask Jay if the friend was a male or female. I guessed that Jay must have gone from SVPC for over three years, because I started seeing him in SVPC only in 2011. However, Robert is now the vice president of the SVPC Youth Ministry. Robert also mentioned the name of some young adults that were

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<sup>178</sup> Kinnaman, David, “Why Do You Think You Are?” Christianity Today, Feb2009, vol. 53 Issue 2, p20-19, 3/4p.



attending SVPC that had also left the church. Pastor Francis Inofomoh also confirmed the reduction of the Presbyterian congregation Lancaster counties in his presentation, title “Effective Youth Ministry.” He indicated that “A study also reveal that attendance in the Presbytery of Donegal which includes 58 congregations in York, Lancaster Counties, fell by 38% in Lancaster alone.”<sup>179</sup> Pastor Inofomoh citation also indicates that the Presbyterian Church is also affected by the trend of not-so sticking faith. Dr. Kara E. Powell and Dr. Chap Clark, in *Sticky Faith*, a book written to “identify the relationship and best practices, that can set children and teenagers on a trajectory of lifelong faith and service.”<sup>180</sup> The book set the language that young adults are familiar with and interject a meaning path through which young people and adults can best visualize the point of change in young people. At present the SVPC congregation is declining. The official membership, which was about 153 in 2008, when I came in as an intern, it’s now 173 in 2011. It is an irony that the numbers doesn’t match the number of the attendees during service. It is hard to witness 60 people in services. The members of the SVPC involvement at the church is beginning to grew more and more sporadic, especially with the young people, who are hardly notice in service. I was privilege to meet some of the SVPC young people who had left the church and came back. Although, some of them came back to live with their mother, but they came back with children. Their mother introduced the babies, as “my grandchildren.” With pride the mother introduced their babies to me.

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<sup>179</sup> Francis Inofomoh, Site Team.

<sup>180</sup> Kara E. Powell and Chap Clark, *Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in your Kids* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), Back Cover.

According to Dr. Foy and Ms. Ramsey in their separate interview with me said “they come back when they have kids or when they are married.” To confirmed their observation and statement, some members who grew up in the church, left the church and now that they are married, some of them even has children, came back to live their parents and they are back in SVPC. Pastor Inofomoh also stated that 11% of college student left their churches. At SVPC we hardly see those who are now in college in service. Before they went to college they were frequent in services, but now we do not see them in church, except on *facebook*, where we chat. Do they still have “sticky faith?” The biblical worldview phenomena are setting on SVPC young people.

Does it then mean that those who left the church have a different biblical worldview? Kinnaman and Gabe stated what it means to have a biblical worldview:

A person with a biblical worldview experiences, interprets, and responds to reality in light of the Bible’s principles. What Scripture teaches is the primary grid for making decisions and interaction with the world.<sup>181</sup>

Although, Kinnaman and Lyons gave their interpretation of a person with a biblical worldview on page 73 of the *unChristian* book, as I read this aspect of the book, I started thinking of the Jehovah Witnesses who come to knock my door early in the morning to sell their “Watchtower” pamphlet. Sometimes we discuss God and the Bible. Would JW’s be counted among those who has biblical worldview? My curiosity center on Gary and Jackie, husband and wife, though they are Jehovah Witnesses, became my friends after many arguments have erupted between us about God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. In one of our conversation Gary once said to me that my going to a seminary is a

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<sup>181</sup> David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, 73.

waste of time, because the founding father of Christianity, like Apostle Paul never attended any seminary. To further complement Kinnaman and Lyons explanation on a person with biblical worldview; the person believes that Jesus is without sin, God is the Omni-potent and Omniscient who still rule the universe today, God give salvation or unmerited favor, which cannot be earned, Satan is real, a Christian must evangelized Christ, the Bible is accurate, unchanging moral truth exist and the Bible defines moral truth.<sup>182</sup>

Dr. Rick Walston, Ph.D. in his “Coffee Talk” Article title, “A Few Major Differences between Jehovah’s Witnesses and Christianity,” wrote JW’s and what they believed. Although, some points in the Article I am familiar with, Dr. Walston extends his writing to a conversation or a discussion which would allow both the reader and the writer to be engage in. I am still on the point of biblical worldview. JW’s believe in Jesus Christ, but not the Holy Trinity, they do not believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, JW’s do not believe that Jesus Christ is God, JW’s teach that Jesus Christ was Archangel Michael who later became a man, they also believe that Jesus Christ was only a perfect man, they did not believe that Jesus Christ rise from the dead in his physical body, JW’s teach that they are the only true church on earth and their member are save, while all other churches will go to hell, JW’s did not believe that God give grace; they teach that good work are necessary for salvation, JW’s teach that when the body is dead the soul also die, which also indicates that the end on human existence is on earth, not in heaven, JW’s teach that they are the 144,000 that will go to heaven

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<sup>182</sup> David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, 73.

(Revelation 7:4), they teach that medical blood transfusion is a sin and never pay homage to the flag and sing the National Anthem, they never celebrate Christmas or birthday, they never serve in armed forces.<sup>183</sup>

From the above “Coffee Talk,” Dr. Walston give a clear indication that JW’s doctrine, though gathered momentum by the number of followers they gathered in their Kingdom Hall, contradicted what is actually a biblical worldview, using Kinnanman and Lyons interpretation of the principle of biblical worldview into perspective. However, to translate the Kinnanman and Lyons finding into figure, it also means that out of ninety-five million American between 18 to 41 year old, about 60 million that are committed to Jesus Christ, but only 3 million have biblical worldview.<sup>184</sup> To have biblical worldview is to have spirit education. Sunday school is an important aspect of the church, which young adults may embrace for them to develop a biblical worldview. In the book of Proverb stated thus “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). The book of Proverbs is a “collections of wise saying”,<sup>185</sup> or a book of wisdom. King Solomon, who is the author of the book, is attested to be knowledgeable and the knowledge impacted also attested to his literary skill.<sup>186</sup> King Solomon message in Proverbs does intended that “wisdom can be taught and be passed

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<sup>183</sup> Rick Walston, “A Few Major Differences between Jehovah’s Witnesses and Christianity,” [www.columbiaseminary.edu/coffeetalk](http://www.columbiaseminary.edu/coffeetalk) (accessed 12/11/12).

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>185</sup> Andrew E. Hill & John H. Walton, “Proverbs” in *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 286.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

on from generation to the next,”<sup>187</sup> but it is very important for “young people to listen, receive and obeying the teaching.”<sup>188</sup> The book of Proverbs also teaches that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10). The Sunday school and other Bible study are the only ways for the young people to gain knowledge of the Bible and wisdom, that will create in them a renewed heart and a right spirit, however, in order for them to understand that the pastor or the preacher is not a perfect person, they will have to “listen, receive and obey” the teaching of the Bible, not the Sunday teachers.

For young adults to be train properly, so that their lives may be better in the future, training must first start at home. Kara Powell and Chap Clark also testified to the fact that “Charity begin at home.” The two authors stated that “building Sticky Faith doesn’t start when your kids are seniors, or even juniors. The reality is that your kids’ faith trajectories are formed long before twelfth grade.”<sup>189</sup> This is a fascinating expression of the route to faith. Parental involvements in their children religious lives start at home. If parents are not regular church attendees, the children will also not be regular at church. In order to build the faith of children, children will have to hear the Word at a very tender age, because “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). I am also praying for my son who will be eleven years old; that now he plays the drum for the church, to listen to the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Sunday school, so that he will benefit from the teaching.

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 288.

<sup>188</sup> Andrew E. Hill & John H. Walton, 288.

<sup>189</sup> Kara E. Powell and Chap Clark, 26.

Rev. West also gave other statistical report by others researchers. Some of the research found out that an alarming rate is leaving church, which also reduces the church population, due to “personal disbeliefs about faith.”<sup>190</sup> The issue undoubtedly is not isolated to Sound View PC, but a general problem for the entire church. John H. Armstrong in an article on December 14, 2010 on “Why are Young Doubters Leaving the Church in Large Numbers?” Armstrong reflected on Drew Dyck, article in *Christianity Today*. It has open fact that young people doubt Christianity as the only way to God. From Armstrong citation, it is stated, that there is “A corresponding drop in church involvement is also evident in this recent research.”<sup>191</sup> Armstrong must have been thinking about all the researches done by various Researchers on why young people are leaving the church. The researches continue to expand, for instance,

Rainer Research says that approximately 70 percent of American youth drop out of church between the age of 18 and 22. The Barna Group estimates that 80 percent of those reared in the church will be “disengaged” by the time they are 29<sup>192</sup>

Apart from the biblical worldview issues, something must be happening in the minds of the young people that make them not to want to stay in church anymore, because there are prove in the researches that most of the young people were in the church before they decided to leave the church.

From my understanding of the young people, it seems that lack of unity among the teachers and the leaders is a means of getting anything done. Although, the Pastor and

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<sup>190</sup> David Kinnaman, 85.

<sup>191</sup> John H. Armstrong, “Why are Young Doubters Leaving the Church in Large Numbers?” [johnharmstrong.typepad.com](http://johnharmstrong.typepad.com) (accessed on 11/27/12).

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

other preachers preached unity, the leaders are not united in walking and working together as a team. Not only are church leaders call for salvation, their life should worthy of their calling. Leaders should be caring; as some young adults have complained that the leaders don't care for them. Probably, that is why the young people "disengaged" themselves from the church. In my quest to understand how the young people in SVPC would fit into the system of worship during service, I found out that some of the senior are not ready to let go of the services. I am not advocating that the senior should not partake in the services, but the young people are giving way for the senior, who will not allow them to perform. This is something that the church leaders must look into, in order for the young people to be involve in services.

### **Brief Discussion on Reasons Young Adults Leave the Church**

Rev. Sonja West gave some reasons which some young adults' gave researchers for leaving church. The church liken as a Hospital. The young adults see the church as a hospital. They asked "who ever heard of being hurt in a hospital?" The young adults are criticizing the church of inflicting physical, emotional, spiritual and even sexual injuries on them. According to LifeWay Research, church dropout, due to the church being "Judgmental" were (51% vs. 24%) when compared to those who continue to attend the church. "Life happens." LifeWay Research also stated that 97% young adults between ages 18 to 20, which is within my focus group age 18-19, cited significant changes in their lives since they left the church. Those who are now in college is (25%). Although, some SVPC young adults are also in college, they are not up to 8% of the total congregation. Some of the SVPC young adults' recently move to other borough, so they could not be counted; because they stop coming to SVPC. Rev. West in her presentation

stated that LifeWay research group indicated that (22%) young adults claimed that they are too busy to go to church. Elijah, at the seminar which was held on July 21, 2012, stated that he is too busy working that he does not have the time to come to church. Some other members of SVPC young adults age 20-25 could attend the seminar and conference, because they are working. The seminar and conference also open my understanding that though some young adults claimed to be working, so that they are too busy to come to church. It is a fact that cannot be contested.

However, on their off day they stay at home, even when SVPC have two services; 8:00 and 11:00am services. We don't see them at the Friday night youth fellowship meetings. The condemnation of church leaders by young people on the ground of hypocrisy is very prominent among young people. Young adults are beginning to find it very difficult to tolerate the hypocrisy in the church. From the televangelists who preached the infamous gospel called prosperity preaching and the financially thirsty pastor and the sexual impropriety widespread scandal of Catholic priests, young adults are also rejected Jesus Christ. Christianity has been portrayed in the media as a religion that preaches one thing and practices another. Even so, some parents are interested in the church teaching their children enough spiritual guidance. For instance, one of SVPC parent complained about her children not getting enough spiritual guidance and that when her daughter go to school she always fight with her teachers; as a result she condemned the church. Spiritual guidance from parenting for the purpose of faith building, Powell and Clark insisted that there is nothing like that. They wrote, "As much as we wish there were a foolproof plan for Sticky Faith parenting, we will be first to admit that there



isn't.”<sup>193</sup> The parent faith cannot lead to the children salvation. Unless the parents inculcate in the mind of their children at an early age the love of Christ and what Christ has done for Christian, the children may not embrace Christianity. On the other hand, if parents go to church with their kids the kids may later decides to be disciples for Christ; because they will be taught the way to remain in Christ (Proverbs 22:6).

However, some adults in SVPC feel to say that college students are always having something against the church. I am compelled to say with my understanding of young adult dropout syndrome done by various researches, like the Barna Group stand out to clarify this point. David Kinnaman in an article published on November 16, 2011 identifying the “Five Myths about Young Adults Church Dropouts,”<sup>194</sup> on the “Myth 3”, debunked the idea, stating, that ‘college certainly plays a role in young Christians’ spiritual journeys, but it is not necessarily the ‘faith killer’ many assume.”<sup>195</sup> The college life in American may be different from what is experience in other parts of the world. Although, the excitement and vibrancy experienced by freshman may be an obstruction towards church going, it does not affect ones relationship with God. There are limited restriction and expectations quite alright, but the availability of peer pressure also matters much in the life of young adults in colleges and also the search for identity.

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<sup>193</sup> Kara Powell and Chap Clark, 27.

<sup>194</sup> The Barna Group, “Five Myths about Young Adult Church Dropout,” [www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org) (accessed on January 13, 2013).

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

Les Parrott III indicated that “teens identify with people they admire.”<sup>196</sup> Teen’s wants to be a rising star, by imitating those they see in the movies or in real life, during what will make them popular among their peer, as such, some of them fall into bad company. These factors may be handicap for the upward movement of the young adults in college spiritual life, which may not allow them to hear the voice of God whispering to their and souls. Kinnaman suggested that the college student “can’t tear down what was never built up in the first place.” There must be structure, before thinking of tearing down one, but without a structure, there is nothing to tear down. The teen’s must be willing to adhere to the teaching of scripture, which will endowed them with the wisdom and understanding of Jesus Christ and the Church. Obviously, God, Jesus and the Church is not the problem of the teens, but their struggle for identity is the problem.

Rev. West concluded presentation by asking “what can be done about it?”

Quoting David Kinnaman from the Barna Group, she stated thus:

Much of the Ministry to teenagers in America needs an overhaul – not because churches fail to attract significant numbers of young people, but because so much of those efforts are not creating a sustainable faith beyond high school. There are certainly effective youth ministries across the country, but the level of disengagement among twentysomethings suggest that youth ministry fail too often at discipleship and faith formation. A new standard for viable youth ministry should be – not the number of attenders, the sophistication of the events, or the ‘cool’ factor of the youth group – but whether teens have the commitment, passion and resources to pursue Christ intentionally and whole-heartedly after they leave the youth ministry nest.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Les Parrott III, “Adolescence: A Struggle for Identity” in *Helping the Struggling Adolescent: A Guide to Thirty-six Common Problem for Counselors, Pastor and Youth Workers* (Grand Rapid, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House), 18.

<sup>197</sup> Sonja West.

The Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) Youth Ministry, can attest the Kinnaman suggestion of needing overhauling. There is some element that made this conclusion an objective of fact. For instance, the young adults have their fellowship on every Friday night at 7:00pm. They are treated to Pizzas and Sodas for dinner. Although, they go on trips, the other event which they embark on is apple picking, these they do yearly. Once the young adults in Sound View PC graduated from high school, they stopped coming to the youth fellowship and later stopped coming to church. According to Dr. Clementine Foy, the Chairperson of the Christian Education Committee and Elder LaVerne Ramsey, the Superintendent of the Sunday school in a separate interview with me, stated some of the young adults leave the church, but they come back when they started having babies. Dr. Foy stated, that “they have to fight the world.” The world she was referring to is the world of Satan. Instead of coming, they now overlooked the youth fellowship as underage group.

In the SVPC the survey from the questionnaire on those who are currently attending church were 17.24% and on those who are frequently attending church on every Sunday are 17.24%. These were the same people answer yes on the previous question. We are pleased at least to find that few of the young adults’ age 18-19 were frequent in Sunday service, however this does not indicate their performance in the service. What this revealed is that most of the young adults’ involved in the question were still coming to church with their mothers; with exception of only 3.44%, who come to church without their parents. On the question, why do they come to church? 17.24% said to worship and fellowship. To authenticate the youngsters view of worship is to be in church doing services while they are sitting at the back either chatting or discussing boyfriends and

girlfriends and that is what they called fellowship. Sometime, when the preaching is going on this young adults' are there texting each other that is their means of communication, so there talking wouldn't disturb the services; smart kids. These same kids are the ones attending the Friday night fellowship meeting, attending youth functions, been part of the worship leader and participating in all youth functions.

My fear is that their involvement may be too much and it may also become monotonous, which if not careful may lead to further migration. Although, they tried to fit-in where other kids are not forth coming, however, they may be incorporated in the service and into growing more spiritually, so that they will not also migrated like the rest. It is an advantage to the church if they can focus their teaching on conversion and discipleship, so that all the young adults' who think outwardly the church may have a "much better chance of retaining them inwardly."<sup>198</sup> The action is outside church, that is what the young people feel, however so many things can be done internally, which may be better than those things that they look on to and that is luring them outside the church. For example, young adults like partying outside the church; we may incorporate partying into the fellowship center, once in a while, without alcohol, so that it will give them a sense of belonging to the church.

How do you rate your overall satisfaction with your church? 10.34% stated satisfied while 3.44% stated dissatisfied and the other 3.44% stated not sure. To the 10.34% that stated satisfaction, it should be noted that such young people may have something that attract them to church which also gave them satisfaction, however, if

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<sup>198</sup> Tom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III. *The Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 2008), 86.

those attractions are taking away from them, they may be forced to migrate. For instance, two young adults' migrated from SVPC to another church on Castle Hill, not too far from Soundview Avenue where SVPC is located. When I asked them why they left SVPC; their answer was that they don't like the music that choirmaster is always playing. They said that he is playing old fashion music, but they needed modern music. The same people complained about the choirmaster not ready to teach the young adult choir any music. The church leader has to take into consideration the allegation level against the choirmaster, that if the church want young people to be in the church. Although, the two sisters didn't the choirmaster, they just decided to leave. The not so sure are in the same categories with the dissatisfied, because any little thing may trigger off the not so sure to dissatisfaction. One of the young people who have been in the young adults' choir has not been coming to church. She was frequent when the young adults' choir was still on; immediately the choir stops functioning she stop coming to church (See data on Appendix L).

Dr. Foy, who has spent almost 60 years in Sound View PC also said that "They leave when they get into college, the church is a market place, it a general occurrence." Some young adults at the Sound View PC has join others churches, because these trend; Kisha, who was the president of the Youth Ministry joined another Presbyterian Church in the Bronx, because she has passed the age of the group in the Sound View Young Adults; confirming Dr. Foy assertion that the church is a "market place." The young adult come with their parents, but when they reach the college age they leave and never come. Elder Ramsey has a take on the issue of Kisha leaving the church for another; she stated

that “peer pressure” is one of the attributes of young adults leaving a church for another (See leaders interview on Appendix H).

In order to overhaul the youth ministry, the leaders’ activity has to be characterized by leader conducts; attitude to one another through love as Christ demonstrated throughout his ministry, patience and self-control as Apostle Paul advocated in Ephesians 5: 22-23. The leadership structure must be examine and evaluated. Leadership training must be uppermost in the pastor’s priority; if the leaders are not trained, they will not be able to train other leaders, especially, the young adult’s leaders. The Sunday school is at the mercy of the pastor. Although, there are teachers for the Sunday school, the teens are not committed. The Adults Sunday school start at 9:45 to 10:45am and Junior and Senior High Sunday school at 10:00 to 11:00am, but one can hardly see one young adult in the Sunday school class. They are also not committed to the Sunday school. Conversation doing Sunday school section should be engaging the young adults in biblical conversation; but instead some leaders engage young adults’, who are supposed to be in Sunday school, and be taught the act of discipleship in Basketball conversation; thereby distracting and disturbing the adults and the preschool Sunday school class by their noises.

Church members are realizing that there is more to life than just coming to church and leaving after services. The conduct of a good Christian must be established through Sunday school and Bible study. However, no effort has been put in place to motivate and encourage the young adults to attend Wednesday Bible study and Prayer meeting. The repercussion is very glaring, as no young adults, except just about three of them are featuring sometimes in the regular church services, while the average of the adult choir is

about 55. This is problematic, because the purpose of the youth ministry would be defeated if something is not done immediately.

Pastor Inofomoh, in his presentation towards the seminar stated that the definition of the youth ministry is either “activity oriented” or “spiritually based.” He defined Youth Ministry as “every effort by the Christian community to reach-out to the youth with the love of God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.” The youth in the church are to reach out to other youth in the community with an adult’s guidance. There is also a great need for the youth to experience the “Great Commission”, without which they may not be able to evangelize to their age mate. The SVPC young adults though are trying to reach out, by initiating programs that may encourage the youth in the Soundview community, never get the support from the church. The Session must have to meet before money can be approved for programs and trips; if the Session meets only once in the month, that means that their programs will have to wait. This is not supposed to be so the youth ministry by the way of urgency they be well attended financially.

### **Young Adults and the Struggle for Identity**

In my presentation at the same seminar as a way to sought solution to the problem of young adults’ migration, my presentation center on “Young Adults and the Struggle for Identity.” I examined the possible start of the problem, which I sincerely believe start from the adolescent age. It’s rare to meet a migrating youngster who wasn’t raised in the church. The explosiveness of the adolescent’s age starts from “puberty.” Les Parrott III,

writes, that “achieving a sense of identity is a major developmental task of teenagers.”<sup>199</sup>

Young adults in their continuous search for identity become rebellious as they try to emulate concept of other people notion. “Identity is what identifies somebody.”<sup>200</sup> Who they are and what can be used to identified them. Young people developmental task always start at the age of “puberty.” What then is “puberty?”

Puberty is a stage in adolescence in which an individual become physiologically capable of sexual reproduction, mark by genital maturation, development of secondary sex characteristics, and the first occurrence of menstruation.<sup>201</sup>

Adolescent age start from the ages of 13 to 19; every young adult must passed through the stage of puberty in their life. This is the stage when adolescent start noticing bodily changes and the stage when young people wants to make and take decision on their own. Although, their decision may not be the best, as most of their decision may be derive from peer pressures or decisions that may be an emulation of somebody else style, just because they are in search for identity. Puberty is described “as a bomb that is more powerful than dynamite.”<sup>202</sup> Dynamite: is a powerful explosive composed of nitroglycerin or ammonium nitrate combine with an absorbent material and usually is packaged in stick. The device when ignited it explode, so it is with the puberty age,

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<sup>199</sup> Les Parrott III, “Adolescence: A Struggle for Identity” in *Helping the Struggling Adolescent: A Guide to Thirty-six Common Problem for Counselors, Pastor and Youth Workers* (Grand Rapid, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House), 18.

<sup>200</sup> *Encarta English Dictionary* (1999), s. v. “London.”

<sup>201</sup> Les Parrott III, 18.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*



which also create a rebellious attitude in young adults. Young adults in the search for identity dissociate themselves from their parents and tend to lean towards their peers.

#### Characteristics of Young People Searching for Identity

#### **Les Parrott III identified “Four Fundamental Views of the Self”<sup>203</sup>**

- The Subjective Self is the adolescent’s private view of who [she/he] sees themselves to be.
- The Objective Self is what others see when they view the adolescent.
- The Social Self is the adolescent’s perception of [herself/himself] as they think others sees them to be.
- The Ideal Self is the adolescent’s concept of who [she/he] would like to become, [her/his] ultimate goal.

#### **How Adolescents Search for Identity**

Les Parrott III also examined seven common paths through which adolescents search for identity.

**Through Families Relations:** Family Influence. Families have significant impact on young adults’ identity formation. To claim individual trait or specific personality and to claim adulthood, teenagers dissociate themselves from their protecting parents. “But individuality may also be found in reaction to the identities of one’s brother and sisters.”<sup>204</sup> Not only can teenagers who aspired to move out of childhood kick against their parental influence, they also react emotional to their brothers and sisters identities.

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Les Parrott III, 19.

A young adult may seek to choose another vocation that may be different from his brother and sister's vocation.

### **Through Status Symbols**

“Adolescent's try to establish themselves as individuals through prestige.”<sup>205</sup> They “seek out behaviors that are readily observable,”<sup>206</sup> by forming self-identity, which they express through behavior that is affiliation with some specific group. For instance, young adults want to purchase sport cars, pull down their pants (sag), put tattoos, buy designer clothes, have possession like the adults and some want to be like some famous basketball players, like LeBron James, a National Basketball Association player from Miami Heat.

### **Through “Grown-Up” Behavior**

Strong Desire to be like Adults. Teenagers feel that by behaving like adults they will bring recognition and acceptance to themselves and also that they have achieved identity. Young people resort to behavior that is “symbolic of adults.”<sup>207</sup> They begin by engaging in practices that noticeable behavior of adulthood; what Les Parrott term the “tabooed pleasure”<sup>208</sup> like drinking, drugs, boyfriend and girlfriend relationship or premarital sex and smoking. These attitudes of young adults are “to gain independence from family restrictions and to increase their social acceptance or even for adventure or

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Les Parrott III, 20.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

curiosity.”<sup>209</sup> Through forbidden behavior, young adults resorted to exploit any opportunity that is open to them to exert self-control and to restrict parental control, in order to be accepted by their peers and in order to advocate change in their lifestyle.

### **Through Rebellion**

“Rebellion is a logical consequence of young people’s attempts to resolve incongruent ideas and find authentic identity.”<sup>210</sup> Thinking of my own experience and perceptive on this matter, by looking at my 20 year old daughter. Immediately, my daughter turned 18 years, I found some rebellious attitude in her. She refused to go to the same church with us. Instead of her confiding in her parents, she now bases her confidence in her peers. She now has contrasting ideas, which is different from her parent ideas. While in her view point she is always right. Rebellious attitude bring separation between young adults and their parents and between teenagers and authority. Although, young people still seek their parental security, while they tend to be unique and independent.

### **Through Others Opinions**

“Essential to identity formation is the validation of one’s self-image by other people’s opinions.”<sup>211</sup> During my days as a teenage soccer player, I was always induced by people making remark about my playing, especially when I score a goal in a competition. People’s opinion about my playing encouraged me to put in more effort to always strive to score a goal in a match. But some days were negative, due to the fact that

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Les Parrott III, 21.

we lost the match, because I could not score a goal in that match. “Adolescents perceptions of themselves change, depending on what they believe others think about them.” Anytime we lost a match, the yoke will fall on me, because I did not score a goal. I played the role of my admirer. This so affected my playing; because I tend to play to the satisfaction of my fan and my team, not to my own satisfaction. Some “adolescents do not always fall in line with what others think of them.”<sup>212</sup> Contrary to my own perception, some adolescents do not change their perception, even though their perceptions are negative.

Parents style to please their children. Sometimes, parents want to say positive thing concerning their children, for example a parent will say positive things to his young adult; like “you are the best and you will be a great scholar or a great basketball player or you will be a medical doctor when you grow up.” But aware of the young adult weakness, the teenager may feel “uncomfortable with an affirmation”<sup>213</sup> that does not considered their weaknesses. So, they tend to prove their parents and admirers wrong, by doing what they feel is good for themselves and by relieving “themselves of the burden of being perfect;”<sup>214</sup> and to shape their identity. Pastor Cleotha Robertson of Sound View Presbyterian Church, Soundview Ave, Bronx, New York, after his sermon and when opening the gate of the church to those who have not yet received Christ in their lives; always say, “There is no perfect church, no perfect pastor and no perfect congregation.

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> V. Lorenzo Johnson, “Helping for the Struggling Teenager: A Guide to Common Problem for Parents, Counselors, & Youth Workers,” [www.ficotw.org/school.html](http://www.ficotw.org/school.html) (accessed on 10/30/12).

<sup>214</sup> Les Parrott III, 21.

We all need a church where we can worship God.” This thought may be taken a risk, because some people come to church to see perfection in the pastor and church member or leaders. Although, Jesus Christ whom we serve is a perfect leader, the unchurched and the Atheists may seek perfection on all Christians.

Pastor Inofomoh at the conference, which took place on August 18, 2012, on “Exodus of Young Adults: The Spiritual Dimension,” cited Roy Taylor, the Clerk of the Presbyterian Church General Assembly paper presented on July 6, 2011, title, “Perspective on Human Sexuality and Ordination” where “forgiveness” is paramount in his quote. The church does not make one perfect; we are been sponsored by the Grace. Contrary to the view of the critics, the unchurched and Atheist who never see any good in the church, the church is the gathering or assembly of people. As they in the world commit sin or disobeys the Lord, same thing it is with the church. David in Psalms said, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalms 51:5) and in another book in the Bible, Apostle Paul, stated that “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Roman 3:23). “Forgiveness” is very essential in Christianity, but it is also done through the teaching of Jesus Christ. However, the teaching may be done by the teachers in the seminaries, pastor and Sunday school, except the Holy Spirit put in the mind of the victims, there may not be forgiveness.

### **Through Idols**

“Adolescents will often over-identify with famous people to the point of apparent loss of their individuality.” Young adults idolized celebrities. They like to be famous, like some basketball player, some movies actors and other professional athletes. “Celebrities become “model” because adolescents are looking for a way to experiment with different

roles.”<sup>215</sup> Teenager may identify with a known figure, like LeBron James of the Miami Heat, Michael Jordan and Michael Jackson. Some ladies also like to be Alicia Key and Jennifer Lopez, trying to be like them, therefore, losing their own identity. “Idols allow them to test out new behavior and attitudes before incorporating them into their own identity.”<sup>216</sup> For the sake of identification, young people neglect their own God given talent to seek for “new behavior and attitude” in others. Although, contrary to the believed that young people incorporate the idolized behavior into their identity, sometimes, they grow to discard all necessary attitudes which they accommodate into their lives.

### **Through Cliquish Exclusion**

“In their search for identity, adolescent may become remarkably intolerant and even cruel as they exclude others on the basis of minor aspects such as dress.”<sup>217</sup> Young people do not want to be associated with anyone who may have contrasting, unattractive and unacceptable view to their ideas. They even try to strengthen their identity by scorning and excluding their peers, those among who does not accept and share their views, without feeling any remorse.

### **Problems with the search for identity**

The explosiveness of the adolescent’s age started with their search for identity. Some young adults try to reach adulthood before they get there. As they grow into adulthood, they “regress into a childish state and thus avoid having to make decision on

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<sup>215</sup> Les Parrott III, 22.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Les Parrott III, 22.

confusing issues.”<sup>218</sup> My daughter once she was 18 years old, try to make decision as an adult, but it behooved to say, it was not the best decision. She stepped out at about 11:00pm going to see a movie. When I told her it was too late to go to a movie theatre at this time, she said to me; “daddy, I’m now an adult.” She came back home at about 2:00am. “Adolescent is a period of stress and turmoil for many young people.”<sup>219</sup> As young people search for their identity, they go through pressure and chaos “to lack of experience,”<sup>220</sup> in order to beat any situation that may arise, thus making it worse for them as they struggle for change in their lives.

### **Why Adolescents Struggle**

“The establishment of a personal identity is not easy. The danger of identity confusion lurks around every bend.”<sup>221</sup> Young adults live to experience outrageous confusion as they struggle for their identity. Erikson pointed out some confusion in young people before they reach adulthood.<sup>222</sup> They are as follows:

### **Physical Change**

The physical changes in adolescent start with “biochemical changes,”<sup>223</sup> which may be observed with some pimples all over the face, having a crack voice, wearing short and tight jeans that may draw attention, growing beard, start menstruation and breast

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Les Parrott III, 23.

<sup>220</sup> Les Parrott III, 23.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

development. These features may be traumatic, as the adolescent is ushered into adulthood. This gateway to adulthood may create in the child a sort of moodiness and rebellious attitudes.

### **Sexual Change**

“As the adolescent’s body begins to take on the characteristic shape of his or her sex, new behaviors, thought, physiological processes occur.”<sup>224</sup> Sexual changes occur with physical changes and sexual changes. Angela Oswait, on “Primary Physical Changes Associated with Puberty”<sup>225</sup> identified two types of physical changes in the puberty stage:

- Changes to primary sex characteristic: this is changes to the physical appearance to boy. Usually it affects the sexual organ and it occurs between ages of 9 and 14 years, but growth is completed at the ages of 12 and 16 years.
- Changes to secondary sex characteristic: this refers to other visible changes in adolescents that accomplished adult maturity. These are visibly in their height and body shape.

Les Parrott III stated that, “new behaviors, thought, and physiological processes occur,” which reacts to the cultural stereotype of sexual changes.” There is persistent change in adolescents as they go through puberty stage. They begin to developed, in boy “spermarche,”<sup>226</sup> in which reproductive cells are developed. “Spermarche is often

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Angela Oswait, “Primary Physical Changes Associated with Puberty,” [www.mentalHelp.net](http://www.mentalHelp.net) (accessed on October 31, 2012).

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.



signaled by nocturnal emission,” also known as ejaculation or “wet dream” and for girl, it is called “menarche” also known as “menstrual period.”<sup>227</sup> These characteristics sort of label the adolescents, that they developed a peculiar pattern, couple with ignorance as they react to any situation that they found themselves, which is also inform of a struggle in young adults.

### **Social Change**

“While the biological changes of puberty are dramatic, they are no more significant than the social changes that occur during adolescence.”<sup>228</sup> The social changes in adolescents occur between the ages of 12 and 15 or when they are in sixth and eighth grades. The school environment changes as they move from elementary school to intermediate or junior high school, which school environment may be larger than the elementary school setting. The movement to other schools has;

Social ramification; it disrupts the old peer-group structure, exposes students to different achievement expectations by teachers, and provides new opportunities for different extracurricular activities.<sup>229</sup>

Adolescents at the stage tend to lean to their peers or new found love than to their parents and teachers. Parents who are not aware of these changes need to be educated, because the consequences involved in the “physical transitions of puberty”<sup>230</sup> may create anxiety

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<sup>227</sup> Maria R. de Guzman, “Understanding the Physical Changes of Puberty.” Maria is Medical Doctor. She is Physical Medicine/Rehab Specialist, in Norfolk, VA. In this publication, she explained “what puberty is and why it occurs, how a young body changes and strategies to help youth through puberty,” [www.elhorn.unl.edu](http://www.elhorn.unl.edu) (accessed on November 3, 2012).

<sup>228</sup> Les Parrott III, 23.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

and confusion, which may result in disruptive relationship between young adults and their parents.

### **Religious Change**

“Adolescents are genuinely interested in religion and feel that it plays an important role in their lives.”<sup>231</sup> Young adults, as they go through puberty and adulthood, relied on the adults to help them mature in their struggle for identity. The characteristics found in one young adult are also the same characteristics found in every one of them. In their search for identity they exhibit character that look like a bomb that is ready to explode. A survey conducted in 2011 by the Pew Research Center found out that 19% of the American populations, “based on aggregated survey of 19,377 people”<sup>232</sup> are without religious affiliation. Cathy Lynn Grossman of USA Today reported that there is an increase in the number of young people without religion. Barry Kosmin, co-author of three American Religious Identification Surveys states that,

Young people are resistant to the authority of institutional religion, older people are turned off by the politicization of religion, and people are simply less into theology than ever before.<sup>233</sup>

Contrary to Les Parrott III assertion, that “Adolescents are genuinely interested in religion” more people, including young adult are turning their back against religious practices. Young adults do not want to be told what to do even in the church. They term corrections are imposition of authority. One has to be careful in dealing with a young

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>232</sup> Cathy Lynn Grossman, “Survey Find 19% Without Religious Affiliation,” [www.USATODAY.com](http://www.USATODAY.com) (accessed on November 3, 2012).

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

adult in the church, because instead of listening to advised, they walk away, contextualizing their doubt in the church. So also “older people” complain of “politicization” of the church. Most of the laws governing some church organizational structures are “based on hierarchical model.”<sup>234</sup> Bishop Claude E. Payne and Hamilton Beazley cited the pyramidal of Episcopal Church, which they called “autocratic model,” because “decisions are made from the top down.”<sup>235</sup> While in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the church is “governed by presbyter (elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament, traditionally called ruling and teaching elders).”<sup>236</sup> People who are without religious affiliation are not only complaining about the church building, they complain of the church operation and practices of the leaders. Some young adults find church leaders as judgmental, while other find it boring. However, the church still appealed to some young adults. Elijah, one of the young people that attended the July 21, 2012 seminar said that he still loves the church, but he has to work to earn some money and unfortunately, he also had to work on Sunday.

### **Moral Change**

An important change occurs in adolescents when they realize that their behavior must conform to social expectation without the constant guidance, supervisor, and threats of punishment they experienced as children.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Claude E. Payne and Hamilton Beazley, “Changing Organizational Structure and Culture” in *Reclaiming the Great Commission: A Practical Model for Transforming denominations and Congregations* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 74.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “Principle of Presbyterian Government” in *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, (Louisville, KY: The office of the General Assembly, 2009-2011), G-4.0300.

<sup>237</sup> Les Parrott III, 25.

Unfortunately, this is one aspect of the adolescent's life that they hate. Young adults lack conformity. They desire that their voice would be heard. Contrary to "social expectation," young adults contradict the expectation of believe bestow on them. At the ages of 18 years, young adults in some states in America are emancipated; therefore they claimed adulthood. On July 21, seminar my daughter, although, 20 years old stated, that "parents are to know that the young adults are not adults, so parents has to treat them as young adults." Karen, who is between the age of 50 and 52 years, in her advice to the young adults stated that the young adults need to listen to their parent. She also gave testimony of what she ended up getting for her disobedience to her parents. Young adults "become more willing to exert emotional energy on moral issues."<sup>238</sup> From all indication, young adult display negative attitude when moral issues are discussed, for instance, Elijah engaged Pastor Francis Inofomoh in a confrontational posture when Pastor Inofomoh at the seminar on July 21, 2012, stated that he paid more than what he bargain for when he did not pay his tithes. Pastor Inofomoh, as a testimony on what God can do to disobedience person, said that he refused to pay his tithes, because he had more pressing problem. Instead, of him paying \$100.00, he ended up paying \$700.00 when a cop gave him a ticket for speeding on his way to Atlanta. But Elijah, who was very vocal at the July 21, 2012 seminar doubted. Elijah said to Pastor Inofomoh, "so you believed that it was God who made you pay \$700.00 for not paying your tithes." The aftermath of this discussion also indicates that most of the young adults do not believe in the Bible, though they sometime attend church services.

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<sup>238</sup> Les Parrott III, 25.

Still on moral issues, “Lawrence Kohlberg, teen reaches a stage of moral development that is based on respect for others rather than on personal desires.”<sup>239</sup>

Contrary to Lawrence Kohlberg statement, Ms. LaVerne Ramsey, who has been in Sound View Presbyterian Church for over 40 years, The Chairperson of the Trustee Board, the Key Person and The Sunday School Superintend, in an interview with me on November 11, 2012, about how to make the young adults stay in the church; stated that until the young people learned how to respect. In Ms. Ramsey own word she said, “The young people should respect the church, the elders, and all official of the church and also to respect their parents.” Although, Ms. Ramsey stated that generally, all the young people have the same characteristics. Respect is “deference” and also to show “admiration” to others. Ms. Ramsey, also an experience Public School teacher, concluded that the young adults lack respect and that the days they start learning how to respect other they will also be encourage to staying in the church. However, Ms. Mayphil White, who also has been in Sound View Presbyterian Church for 24 years, in an interview on Monday, November 12, 2012, stated that “the adults approach to the young adults’ should be flexible.” Ms. White narrated an encounter which happened on one of the Friday Youth Fellowship meeting between the some adult leaders of the youth ministry and the youth. The youth were practicing for their Thanksgiving Service which is to take place on Sunday, November 18, 2012. Although, the Friday fellowship is from 7:00 to 9:00pm, but it was already 9:30pm and the youth wanted to extend their time to about 9:45pm, but the adult leaders objected. My estimation of Ms. Ramsey concern about lack of respect from the young adults is that some young adults leave the church, because they dislike correction

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

and to be told what to do in the church, for they see themselves as adults. Although, Ms. White who is an elder and also the coordinator of the youth ministry stated that protocol should be followed, but sometimes we need to give preference to some issues, especially, when the practice is for Thanksgiving Service. Moral issues, involve the issues of right or wrong and how we should behave. No matter how we want things to always favor or fall on our side, it is never so. The young adults always want to have their ways, because they strive to be adults, but sometimes their ways are not always the best ways.

### **“What Adolescents Do with Their Struggle”<sup>240</sup>**

#### **Young Adolescents Hold Their Feeling to Themselves**

- Like Adam and Eve hiding in the bush
- They camouflage their struggle, hoping they will go away
- Adolescents hide their problem through sublimation – transforming unacceptable impulses into behaviors that are more socially acceptable.
- Act them out, thereby expressing their feeling through impulsive action to reduce tension.
- Work Them Through, thereby concealing any outward show or implication

Young adults, as they go through puberty and adulthood, relied on the adults to help them mature in their struggle for identity. The characteristics found in one young adult are also the same characteristics found in every one of them. In their search for identity they exhibit character that look like “a bomb that is more powerful than dynamite.” This is an attribute of the adolescence age. However, Jesus Christ love them equally as he loved the adults. In his words, Jesus said,

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<sup>240</sup> Les Parrott III, 25.

Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever, does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it (Luke 18:16-17).

Do not hinder young adults in services to God. Young adults are looking for church that will abide by the rule they teach and preached. Young adult Christians need some guardian! Karisma Singley, an 18 years old deacon, who became a deacon before 17 years, in an interview with me on Sunday 25, 2012, said to me, some young adults left for college, but some of them “don’t want to be here anymore, but I don’t know why.” According to the various research done and that are stated above, some college student don’t want to go back to the church, because they feel that they are now above the age group, some follow their peers to their church, while others may be too busy for church. Ms. Singley also stated that some people in the church care, while other does not care whether see the young people or not.

The expectation from this young adult is that church leaders should have the feeling of young people in their heart. Elder Barbara Finney also stated that, instead of criticizing the young people, young people should be encourage to come to church. When asked “what will make young adults stay in the church?” Karisma, said, “Lack of commitment from the young people and ideas are not granted by adults.” The truth of the matter is that Karisma is the secretary of the Sound View Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry and from her indication; certainly some of the young people don’t like to be bothered. When they are called for fellowship or youth meeting, they gave excuses not to attend. The idea that “ideas are not considered by adults,” which she also stated; she was referring to the leaders’ of the youth ministry. Karisma stated that in several occasion the leaders want the young people bring ideas, but when they do, the leaders always turned

them down. Young people ideas are very important in the youth ministry, because they are the ones in the ministry, so their ideas, knowing what they want and what they aspired, will make a difference in the ministry, but they also need adult guidance.

## **SERMON**

As part strategy 3, as a theologian and as a preacher, I have been preaching sermons relating to young people and on Sunday, January 27, 2013, I preached at SVPC, my sermon was titled, “Jesus Made an Open Invitation to Children;” taken from Matthew 19:13-15. Prayer must accompany all things, so before I started my sermon I pray. This is my prayer: O Lord, our heaven Father, you are the King of king and Lord of lord. Thank you for given us another opportunity to see today; you wake us up this morning and you shower your blessing on us. Forgive us our sin, so that we can also forgive those who have offended us. Instill your spirit in us, take not your spirit away from us and give us the grace to continue our fellowship with you. Open my mouth to speak your Word, not my own word, give the hearer an understanding of your Word, so that your name will gloried at the end of this sermon, Amen!

The sermon was about the invitation of Jesus Christ to young people, in order to encourage them for the work of the kingdom. “But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” And he placed his hands on them and went on his way (Matthew 19:15. NB). The focus of the sermon is based on the fact that as Christians we are to enter God kingdom with all purity and like little children who are considered humbled and purified.

## **Brief Introduction of the Gospel of Matthew**



The Gospel of Matthew is among the synoptic gospel. The synoptic gospels are Matthew, Mark and Luke. Synoptic gospel means sharing the same view or similar about Jesus Christ life and ministry, “from a similar point of view and are similar in structure.”<sup>241</sup> Although, the story about Jesus Christ birth is narrated in both Matthew and Luke, but Mark does not have the story of his birth. The story about Jesus Christ open invitation to children is written on the gospel; Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13:16 and Luke 18:15-17. The book of Matthew was considered “the church’s gospel” during the time of Augustine.<sup>242</sup> “Until the nineteenth century”<sup>243</sup> when scholars discovered that Mark was actually the first of the gospel and that Matthew took some of Mark story. Grant T. R. Osborne wrote that “Children here become a model for discipleship and an essential part of the kingdom”<sup>244</sup> Truly, the ministry of Jesus Christ laid much emphasis on children, especially for the kingdom of God, for example, Matt 3:9, 7:11, 10:21, 18:32:16, 19:14; Mark 10:14, 13:12, Luke 18:16 and John 1:12.

Furthermore, Osborne main idea of the passage, (Matthew 19: 13-15), stated that “Far from nuisances to be avoided, children are God’s special gift to the community and are to be embrace. Even more than that, they are the very embodiment of the kingdom in the church.”<sup>245</sup> Young people in church attitude and ideas are to be considered, since they are young, however, most of the adults despise them. Paul in a letter to Timothy said,

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<sup>241</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999), s. v. “London.”

<sup>242</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 21.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 709.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

“Let no one look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in your speech, conduct, love, faithfulness, and purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). The notion of being a child or young adult is not a guaranty that people will look down on you and also it is not a guaranty that the children should continue in bad mannerism, but in good speech, good conduct, love and faithfulness people or adults will respect them.

I will be speaking on a very important “pronouncement story”<sup>246</sup> in the gospel of Matthew. Jesus has often talked about the Kingdom of God; as a matter of fact the kingdom of God is the centerpiece of Jesus teaching. The Synoptic Gospels recorded the comments, while Mark, Luke and John used the phrase “the kingdom of God,” Matthew used “the kingdom of heaven” they are all identical. For instance, “the Kingdom of God has drawn near (Mark 1:14, Matthew 4:17), “the Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence” (Matthew 11:12), “the Kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:21) and “Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:3-7). Jesus used many parable and illustration to demonstrate the kingdom of God. In Matthew (13:1-8), Jesus used the parable of the Sower to illustrate and “compared the kingdom of God to a seed planted in the hearts of men and women.” Jesus also said to his disciples,

I tell you the truth. Unless you turn around and become like children, your will never enter the kingdom of heaven, Whoever then humble himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3-4, NetB ).

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<sup>246</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Zondervan, 2010), 711.

Jesus called a child and used its pureness to demonstrate the condition under which one can enter the kingdom of God. Jesus again demonstrated the condition of entering the kingdom of God with children. Jesus said “But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14, NetB). Jesus also gave this assurance about his saying concerning the kingdom of heaven. He “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Matthew 24:35, NetB). All the prophecies of Jesus Christ were fulfilled. Jesus was called a prophet (Matthew 21:11). According the Grant R. Osborne, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”<sup>247</sup> Jesus is not to be compare to Moses; Jesus is the “prophet from Galilee.” Although, it seems that the crowd only considered him a prophet with no distinction from other prophets, Jesus is a prophet and as well as the Messiah, because Jesus called himself a prophet (Mark 6:3-4, Matthew 13:57). However, the focus of this sermon is the attachment of the pureness of children to the kingdom of God.

### **Analysis of the Sermon**

The text tells us about our work as adults Christians to our children, which included youth and young adults. We are all called to God services, whether male or female, and whether adults and young adults. Paul gave testimonies on how he started evangelized to both the Jew and the Greek (Acts 20:21, Roman 1:16, ESV). And to do this work God has given us the instrument and tools in the form of talent (Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:12-28, ESV), that will enable us do the work. So children are not left

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<sup>247</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 757.

out of the talents God gave us. God entrusted each of us with his property according to our ability.

Unfortunately, the disciples of Jesus did not understand that children are also useful in the kingdom of God. So when they brought children to Jesus that he might bless them, his disciples “rebuked them.” Matthew recorded that “Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people.” (Matthew 19:13). Grant R. Osborne wrote that “There is some evidence that in Judaism children were often brought to teachers/rabbis for blessing, especially on the Day of Atonement (Sopherim 18:5).”<sup>248</sup> I know that when I about 7 or 8 years old my mother used to take me to her pastor at Christ Apostolic Church, Ojora, Ajegunle, Lagos in Nigeria to be prayed for. “Laying of hands was used for parental blessing (Genesis 48:14, 17-18).”<sup>249</sup> When I am not certain that I will come to the United States, one evening my father called me into his room and he asked me where do I want to go? I thought of why my father will ask me such question, because I was almost 37 years old. Then, I was thinking of going to a University in Nigeria. I also thought of my brother, Lucky who was already in the U.S. Then, I quickly responded that I would like to travel to America. Then my father, who was almost 93 years old, laid his hands on my head and prayed for me. Laying of hands is also used in ordaining leaders in our churches, which is also significant in the Bible. For instance, Israel laid his hand on Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:14), in ordaining the first deacons; “and they prayed and laid their hands on

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<sup>248</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 711.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

them” (Acts 6:6) and also in Acts hands were laid for giving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17; 19:6). The trend of laying of hands is not new, for it has been there since time in memorial, but the important thing is that it is done not blessing.

**19:13** “The disciples rebuked the people.” How would the kids’ parents feel by the disciples immoral attitudes towards them? I just believed that no parents will be comfortable with the disciple wicked attitudes towards them and their children. Grant Osborne recognized two motives; the positive motive of the parent who brought their children for blessing and the negative reaction of the disciples who rebuked both the parent and the children.<sup>250</sup> Although, both Mark (Mark 10:13) and Matthew did not say why the disciples rebuked them, it must be that the children may interrupt their trip to Jerusalem.<sup>251</sup> One thing which I admire in Pastor Cleotha Robertson, the Pastor of Sound View Presbyterian Church, is that never complain about children in the service. When children cry during the services or run around, he always say “it is good to see children in services.” While Pastor Robertson loves to see children in services, some pastors gave separate room for children. Children are made to sit separately from their parents or when they cry the Usher will tell their mothers to take them outside, because they are disturbing the flow of the service.

However, some of us in the church also have the same attitudes like that of the disciples against children. Children are complaining of the nonchalant attitudes towards them in the church, especially the young adults, who do not trust the adults. Some of

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<sup>250</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 711.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

them left the church because the church is now perceived as “Anti-homosexual, Judgmental, Hypocritical, Sheltered (old fashioned, out of touch with reality, Too political and Proselytizers (insensitive to others, not genuine).”<sup>252</sup> Young adults are been criticized unceremoniously, by the adults for not acting or behaving as adults. Of course they are called young adults; which means that they still have some childish behavior in them. I wish the adults will also see them as young people and limit their criticism towards them. Some of the adults also see the young people as sinner, but apostle Paul said to the Roman, “For all have sin and fall short of the glory of God” (Roman 3:23). No one born on this earth is not without sin. The attitudes of Christians are not favorable to outsiders, which is the more reason for the outsiders to claim that they are unchristian. This is a “reflection of this jumbled (and predominantly negative) set of perceptions.”<sup>253</sup> The outsiders perceptions when put in percentage the anti-homosexual category is 91%, the judgmental category is 87%, the hypocritical category fall under 85%, the sheltered (old-fashioned, out of touch with reality fall under 78%, the too political category is 75% and the proselytizers (insensitive to others, not genuine) fall under 70%. This is the ways the outsiders perceived us; that “the faith has change for the worse.” No wonder it is now hard to see people joining the church. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons also stated that the attitude of Christians as “gotten off track and is not what Christ intended.”<sup>254</sup> Christ intention is that Christians would be like him or that Christians would emulate him.

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<sup>252</sup> David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, “Christian: Change of the Perception,” [www.qideas.org/contributors/david-kinnaman.aspx](http://www.qideas.org/contributors/david-kinnaman.aspx) (accessed on 12/29/12).

<sup>253</sup> David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

**19:14** But Jesus having seen the wickedness of his disciples towards both the parents and their children, said “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. “Jesus said “do not hinder them” do not hinder the children from coming to their Lord and Savior, do not forbid the children from entering the kingdom of God and do not disturb children from coming to their Messiah. Mark has it on record, that when Jesus saw that the children were prevented from coming to him, he was “indignant” (Mark 10:14). Jesus felt angry, Jesus felt offended and Jesus annoyed at the unfairness and the unreasonableness demonstrated by his disciples.

**19:14** “for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” The pureness of children heart can never be compare to the adults hearts, which is full of and disobedience. Jesus taught about the “centrality of little children in the kingdom community” (Matthew 18:3-5). “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” must become like children before he can enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:1-5). We thank God for we have Jesus Christ who is called the Messiah and Emmanuel, which also mean God with us. If not for Jesus Christ where we will be now; may be some of us may have still be worshipping idol.

**19:15** “And he laid his hands on them and went away;” It is not surprising after Jesus was angry at his disciples to lay his hands on the children. Jesus had just told his disciples why he will lay his hands on the children; “for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” That also tells us that anyone, especially Christians who wants to inherit the kingdom of God must humble himself like a child, because Jesus Christ recognizes the present of young people in the church.

## **What is the Function of the Sermon?**

At the end of the sermon I enjoined the leaders of the church to have a change of heart, especially in the way and manner we handle God's affair, especially our relationships with our young adults, not to take God's matters with levity, to live up our callings, because we shall be held accountable for the young people that were entrusted to us by God.

**Strategy 4:** Conduct conference: The conference was conducted on August 18, 2012 at the Sound View Presbyterian Church. Although, the dates of the seminar and conference conflict with each other, because some site team members travelled out of New York, so the seminar which was initially scheduled to be second on the strategy 1 came first, while the conference which was scheduled for first came second, both seminar and conference took place accordingly. The conference was the Part Two, title: "Adults and Youth/Young Adults Speak Out: Embracing the Future Generation of Young Presbyterians." The conference started at 4:00 p.m. and end at 7:30 p.m. There were four speakers: Pastor Francis Inofomoh of "The Banner of Grace Church," in the Bronx, Rev. Sonja West of the Mariener Temple and also a member of my site team, Pastor Brenda Perry of the University Height Presbyterian Church, in the Bronx and myself. Rev. Sonja spoke on the "10 Commandment for Young Adults Ministry," Pastor Inofomoh spoke on the "Exodus of The Young Adults: The Spiritual Dimension," Pastor Perry spoke on "the Youth and the Ministry" and I spoke on "How Effective is a Church without Youth/Young Adults?" A folder was also created with a flyer, agenda coupled with some newspapers pages, which we felt will encourage the young adults were put in the folders.



## **Analysis of Pastor Inofomoh Presentation on the Conference**

Pastor Inofomoh titled his presentation the “Exodus of the Young Adults: The Spiritual Dimension.”<sup>255</sup> Pastor Inofomoh also stated that “We would like to find out if the local assembly is adhering strictly to the Bible.” The young people in church are now fed up with the hypocrisy found in church leaders, not only in America. Pastor Inofomoh said, that most churches “have taken Jesus out of their pulpits.” The young people now see that Jesus Christ is not represented by the church leaders, but instead, they are representing themselves in the name of Jesus Christ.

Pride has gotten some church leaders. “I am the Pastor of the church!” It may not be in the way I understand it to be, but I still feel that it is pride for someone to be boastful of his position in church, especially when members already knew what position you occupy. The church belongs to Jesus Christ. Though, it was not a confrontational argument; I had made a vow to God. What lead to pride may not often be the case with others. On November 25, 2012, I was admitted at the New York Presbyterian Hospital on West 168th Street in Manhattan, as a result of a stroke. On that fate day, I was coming from work, with my friend going towards the train station suddenly, the J & R bag I was carrying dropped. Then, I tried to talk, but I was speechless. I had my friend speak to me, but I could not respond. I had been the one speaking to her at first. Thai said to me, “what is wrong with you?” I could not answer. I was still trying to talk, but I could not. Then she said, “You are acting funny. I’m going to call the ambulance.” Yet I could not speak: I tried to cough; to be sure that nothing is in my throat that is preventing me from speaking. But there was nothing in my throat.

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<sup>255</sup> Pastor Francis Inofomoh, Site Team.

Fortunately, she had my wife number. She called Blessing, my wife and told her that I am acting funny and she want to call the ambulance. All her conversations with my wife I was hearing, but I still could not speak. Thai called the 911 and before 20 minutes the ambulance arrived. The two medical attendant; male and female asked what was wrong with me. Thai told them what had happened. I was taken into the ambulance. Inside the ambulance they did some emergency test, but they did not found anything that would trigger a stroke. The attendants asked me to cough and I did, but it still remain the same. Then they told my friend that they are taken me to the Downtown Hospital opposite City Hall. We are with to Downtown Hospital. At the hospital, the doctor and nurses surround my bed, trying to find out the course of my stroke. They also took blood to run some quick test. Unfortunately, they could not find anything.

Then, one of the doctors suggested that I should be taken to the New York Presbyterian Hospital. If the bum on the road should have made me gain back my speech, I would have gain it back, because while in the ambulance it seems to me that the driver and the road were in a fight. You cannot imagine how many times I almost fell off the bed, if not for the belt with which I was tied down. It was at New York Presbyterian Hospital after they have done so many other tests, but did not found anything that triggered the stroke; they concluded that it was a minor stroke, but still I wasn't able to speak. Then, I made my vow to God; that if God should restore my speech I will give thanks and praise his name in the church. But my pastor told me "As the Pastor of the church he will call me and my family out and pray for us." I began to wonder how a pastor can present his office as opposed to God supremacy.

In analyzing Pastor Inofomoh presentation, he also states that “There has to be a re-orientation and complete re-dedication on the part of our leaders or a deliberate re-visitation to the old time religion.” The church must rededicate herself to God. The young people are adamant about the way church leaders posit themselves as the leader, not Jesus Christ as the leader; even at the mentioning of God name some leaders would not concur. Hypocrisy is among the accusation levy against the church; remember that the church is not the building, but the people who are called the Christians.

Rev. West also in her presentation on the conference, titled, “The 10 Commandments for Young Adult Ministry” gave some encouragement to the adults. In the first commandment, “Thou shall not take it personally,” she states that the young people are not rejecting God or Jesus and they are not rejecting the church members when they leave the church, but they are rejecting “hypocrisy they see in the church.” In Kinnaman and Lyons wrote that “Only one out of seven outsiders describes Christianity as something that seems genuine and real.”<sup>256</sup> The church is not the building, but the people who are worshipping inside the building; who in themselves are lacking in faith. Young people are in the reality of who God and Jesus Christ is, not the leaders in the church. Their eyes are now open. The leaders are not practicing what they preached. According to Kinnaman and Lyons, on perception of the Christians attitude, said that “Christians say one thing but live something entirely different.”<sup>257</sup> Young people are now the scrutinizers of the Christians attitude. Although, most of them were brought in the

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<sup>256</sup> Kinnaman and Lyons, 75.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 39.

church, but they are now using the argument of “hypocrisy” against the church, in order to persuade the church to change its “hypocritical”<sup>258</sup> posture. When Kinnaman and Lyons wrote about hypocrisy, they defined it as “Hypocrites are people who are two faced or who have double standards. Anyone who says one thing and seems to do another is subject to the label.”<sup>259</sup> The perceptions of outsider to Christianity due to “two faced” or “double standards” have not only made them reject Christianity, it has also made them rejected Jesus Christ. Talking with Deaconess Annie Burroughs of SVPC, she also stated that “the young people needs mentors, but shouting and yelling at them will discourage the youth.” From Deaconess Burroughs comment I deduced that the young people must have seen a pattern of not caring from the adults. Although, the adults in SVPC promised to care of the young people when are being baptized, but unfortunately the adults turn their back by not caring for them. Karisma also complain about the adults not caring for young people and the young people ideas are not always welcome.

The second commandment is “Thou shalt get to know each other.” There is the spirit of change running through the mind of the young people this day. The little child you know let’s say about five years ago, you can no longer call him that little boy, because first of all he is now 6ft plus. How then can one call a boy who is now a six feet a small or little boy? “They have developed their own perspective and they have their own struggles, dreams and plans.” In the adolescents struggle for identity, Les Parrott III identified social change as one of the factor that young people are struggling with. An environmental change disrupts even the “old peer-group structure,” because young

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

people are subjected to different achievement, which may occur as a result of their struggles. The afterthought of this whole scenario is that the church leaders' effort to embrace and talk to young people on one on one basis will give them the privilege to hear what they feel in their heart.

The third commandments stated that "Thou shalt be willing to listen (even if it's not what thou wantest to hear)." One of the characteristics of a good leader is the ability to listen. Rev. West stated that research has found out why young people leave the church. They stated that the church is "not receptive to their questions and doubts about Christianity or their lifestyle choices." It is imperative that the church would not answer young adult questions. If the church has answers to their many questions about the doubts they had about Christianity, I also believed that there should be a response to their questions. However, what about if the church doesn't have an answer? The Bible answers all questions about Jesus Christ. What of if the Bible doesn't answer their question either? All questions need answers. In order to persuade young people to accept the church and not to reject Christ, the leaders must strive for ways to listen to their questions and try to resolve them, instead of jumping into conclusion without hearing their questions. One of the perceptions of the outsider is that the church is "Judgmental."<sup>260</sup> The Christians believed that sinners should be prayed for; however, they hate the sinners. The perception of the outsiders is that "Christians are prideful and quick to find faults in others."<sup>261</sup> This is not peculiar to Christians; however, the outsiders are quick to be send

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<sup>260</sup> Kinnaman and Lyons, 179.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

to hell by Christians. Forgiveness which Jesus Christ proclaimed as one of attributes of a good Christian is far from them; even in the church where love and unity supposed to be the motto.

I observed a conversation between an elderly woman of about 80 years old in SVPC and one of the young people who is 18 years old on Sunday after the 11:00am service. I sat on the chair by the entrance of the church listening. My experience from their conversation is that when a teenager apologized for what she felt she did wrong, the adults should let it be. The elderly lady saw the girl coming to the church after service, rode her bike in the rain just to meet the appointment she kept with one of the leaders of the youth ministry. The elderly lady called her to the side and started interrogating her. I heard the young lady said to her, “I couldn’t keep the appointment yesterday and I promised to come today, but they are not here for the practice.” But the elderly lady said to her, “I am saying that you should have call him, not to allow him to have called you first, when you know you would not come to the practice.” Then, the young lady said to her, “something came up, when I was about coming.” The elderly lady continues to push, so that it became forceful. Then the young lady said to her, “you are sugar coating me, which is not what I mean.” The elderly lady does not like the language of “sugar coating,” and she said to the young lady “that is street talk.” I noticed that the conversation became tense, and then I quickly interrupted them. I told both of them to let it go and that we shall discuss the issues on a later date, just to digress the tension. I was so surprised that the elderly lady called me on the following day, which was Monday; enjoining me to speak to the young lady. Then, I advised the old lady, saying “Don’t you think you are pushing too much. People will say that you are pushing because it has to do

with your grandson.” Then she said, “That is true.” She never mention again. I just mentioned the experience because the young people are tired of adults continue nagging at them for no reason. Just the young lady did not show up for the elderly lady grandson drama practice, the elderly lady said to me “that the young lady has an issue.” Is this not what the outsiders’ percept as “judgmental?” Even among Christians we judge each other.

The fourth commandment according to Rev West presentation is “Thou shalt not focus on ministry to or for young adults, but with young adults.” Young adults prefer spending their time with their peers. The time young people spent with their peers, if such dedication is spent in the services for God in the church, the stronger will be their faith. According to Rev. West, Kara Powell, advised to make services intergenerational. Services should be eventful and more of activities. Room should be created in the services, so that young adults can demonstrate what they have been practicing doing the day. In SVPC, I just believed that the young people want to be involved in the service; that is if they are giving the chance they will perform. The adults are not ready to let go of the services; they want control the services. The Pastors also must be concern and be participatory in the young adults’ performance in services. Young people, though have their own issues, but they always figure out on how to get along and walk with love and in unity with each other.

Commandment number five, “Thou shalt be flexible.” The idea that the archaic system of services must be preserved in church, especially when young adults are open to new ideas is not the best. Church leaders must be open to new ideas. Rev. West stated that “If we try something and it doesn’t work, we shouldn’t necessary keep doing it until

it does.” Rev. West encouragement to the leaders of SVPC is enjoining the leaders, not to continue pouring new wine into old wineskins (Matthew 9:17), because the skin will burst and the wine will be destroy. Leaders must embrace new ideas, especially as the young people are now into technology, social media and new invention.

Rev. West in presenting the six commandments, which states “Thou shalt define expectation,” she stated that the young adults should be able to share what they expect of the church. Kadeem Marulaz in our conversation on Sunday the service, said to me, there is a need to bridge the gap between the young adults and the adults in this church. “Is like the adults does not want to see the young adults involved in the service.” As I look on Kadeem face, I see some frustration. He is the president of the youth ministry and he is very much concern that during his tenure the young people are not showing up in services. He term that to be an adult dominated services which also correspond to what Precious had commented on, when she said SVPC is adults oriented and there is no model for the young people. Rev. West also suggested that the church “may even want to work together to draft a covenant that lists the expectations everyone will try to meet as well as measures of accountability and responsibility.” But SVPC ignore this fact. The adults’ perception on young adults is that they are always sinners. I do not know where they get the idea that young people are sinners. I think I know where they get that from; once you disagree with an adult, you are label a sinner. However, they always forget this fact, “For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God” (Roman 3:23, NetB).

The seven Commandment states thus, “Thou shalt remember: One size does not fit all.” This is a metaphor which states that we all are different. Young people also go through what the adults are going through. Young adults need counseling or advice.



Rather than castigating them, they should always be counseled. In the “foreword” of *sticky faith*, John Ortberg and Jim Candy experienced the failure of Menlo Park P. C., to meet the needs of the young people in their church. Fortunately, there is Tom “who know and love kids and point them to Jesus Christ.”<sup>262</sup> Young adults need people like Tom who care, listen to their complaints or issues and strive to resolve their issues promptly. Sometimes, it is good to first listen before bringing Jesus Christ to the young adults.

The eight commandments: “Thou shalt go beyond the four walls of the church.” Rev. West also states that “Many churches operate on an age-old model in which they built to be the center of communities where people pretty much stayed from cradle to grave.” This is no longer suitable for the young adults. The young adults’ perceptions about some churches, is that they are not a model for young people. The church always aspired to welcome visitors during the opening of the church door, but never goes to visit the visitors. We complain that the young adults are leaving the church; how many times have we gone to reach out to the young adults, who stop coming to church? Rev. West also stressed the need to reach out to them, “not just physically, but even technologically,” she stated. In “The Great Commission” Jesus did not limit evangelism to some people; but he said, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). The nations comprise both adults and young adults. Drew Dyck in telling the story of Abe, who he considered a postmodern leaver, asked this question; “So how can they be reached?”<sup>263</sup> The church has to devise ways to reach out to the young adults.

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<sup>262</sup> Kara E. Powell and Chap Clark, 9.

<sup>263</sup> Drew Dyck, 34.

Dyck, although his friend did not give him a concrete answer, he was encouraged by the response from Abe. Abe said to him, “Who knows, maybe I’ll come back (to faith) someday.”<sup>264</sup> We need such persuasions that will encourage our young people to affirm their coming back to faith.

“Thou shalt not be led by number.” The nine commandments is evangelism, but Jesus Christ did not say that the church should be led by totaling the number of people in the church. The church must focus on caring, love and hospitality, like Jesus expressed on (Matthew 25:36). Another issue which the church must focus its attention on discipleship and establishing a lasting relationship within it’s’ members. Powell and Clark also argued that “we help our kids learn to trust God and create the kind of environment where they are able to explore faith and trust while practicing their freedom and to respond in love.”<sup>265</sup> Even though the church anticipates counting number, the most important aspect of evangelism is the ability to trust God. When young people put their hope in God, their faith will be strengthened, but first of all they will learn how to trust God for his love in an environment, which is supposed to be in the Sunday school.

The Ten Commandment, states “Thou shalt have fun!” It will be good to make the church a fun place for young adults. The church could be more of a transition, rather than a boring place conceived by the notion as a place for only preaching. As I was reading *sticky faith* for my research, I read through the topic, “College Students Gone Wild.” I thought of the idea of parting, which will bring merry-making in the church. But no alcohol, no sex, no drug and it should be limited to certain period in the day. If young

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Kara E. Powell and Chap Clark, 37.

adults would have fun by parting in church and that will make them stay in church, instead of parting outside the church that will make them leave the church and loss their faith . On October 21, 2012 my birthday was celebrated in SVPC. After the celebration church members still come to me to acknowledge the celebration. Young adults and adults enjoy the dancing and food at the party. Something important to write about is that there was no drinking, no alcohol and no smoking. Besides, the party was done immediately after the 11:00am service; that is during the day, not in the night. May be the young adults may formulate their own style of partying with some guidance from the adults, if that will make them stay in church.

On August 18, 2012, I presentation at the conference, a lecture titled “How Effective is a Church without Youth/Young Adults?” The presentation focuses on some of the Bible characters’ that started their ministry at a very youthful age. The youngsters were told that the Bible is the custodial of wisdom and quoting from the New Testament, that “But if anyone is deficient in wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without reprimand, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5, NetB). The young adults were told that living the church is not the way to make it in God Kingdom and forcing them to stay in church at their own detriment is not the way to God Kingdom. The main objective of this lecture was to pursue the young adults to see why they should stay in church, instead of joining violence community outside the church. The adults were also instructed to be mentors to the teenager. The lecture also informed the teenagers to put God first in whatever they are doing. Contrary to the Atheist skeptical argument against the existence of God, the Atheist argued that “a perfect God will not create a universe in which evil exists [and that] since God created everything that God

must have also created evil,” and they reference (Isaiah 45:7, Amos 3:6 and Lamentations 3:38) to prove their points.<sup>266</sup> The unchurched are quick to find fault in the Bible; most of them read the Bible, only to use the knowledge acquired from the Bible to criticize Christians, the church and Jesus Christ. My presentation was in advising the young people. I read the Bible to their hearing:

Fearing the Lord is the beginning of moral knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Listen, my child, to the instruction from your father, and do not forsake the teaching from your mother. For they will be like an elegant garland on your head, and like pendants around your neck (Proverbs 1:9, NetB).

My advised to the young adults is that to fear the Lord is to reverence God, which is the beginning of getting wisdom. And young people should always trust and obey God Word and always have faith in God, because God created humanity and that we should all serve God. I also refer to the first commandments. On the other hand, I advised them not to reject God or Christ as the atheist has indicated. I advised them not to act on their own understanding (Proverb 3:5). It only fools who despise or reject wisdom. Some people always learn in the hard way and it become very difficult for them. Children should honor their father and mother (Exodus 20:12) and another way to be wise; for Bible say their day may long on earth. It is always good to be influence by godly parents. A child who listened and obeyed his parents and parental advice are followed it bring honor and pride to the parents, while the parents will be also proud of the child.

What can be derived from peer pressure? I asked the young people. I then referred the young adults to a situation in the Bronx, where some young adults connived with other to commit crime. Then, I referred them a caption in their folder, a publication in the

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<sup>266</sup> Deem, Rich. “Did God create Evil – Does the Bible Say So?” [www.godandscience.org](http://www.godandscience.org).

News 12, on July 25, 2012, title “Bronx Teen Arraign in Fatal Shooting of 4 – year –old,” where a 17 year old teenager shoot and killed a 4 years old. It good to associate with peers, but when the peers became violent it is good for them as well turn their back to such evil. I advised them that instead of joining bad group or gang, they should emulate people in the Bible who started their ministry when they are young; like Timothy who Apostle Paul said to him,

Let no one look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in your speech, conduct, love, faithfulness, and purity... Do not neglect the spiritual gift you have, given to you and confirmed by prophetic words when the elders laid hands on you (1 Timothy 4:12-14, NetB).

Apostle Paul also advised Timothy,

“But keep away from youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faithfulness, love, and peace, in company with others who call on the Lord from a pure heart. But reject foolish and ignorant controversies, because you know they breed infighting. And the Lord’s slave must not engage in heated dispute but be kind toward all, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponent with gentleness” (2 Timothy 2:22-25, NetB).

Jeremiah was also called by God. The Lord said to Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in your mother’s womb I chose you. Before you were born I set you apt. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5, NetB).

Joseph – was 17 years old (Genesis 37:2) when God started using him. Joseph is truly one of the admirable characters in the Bible. He was a favorite of his father, which incited the passionate envy of his brothers (cf. Acts 7:9). Accordingly, these hateful siblings sold Joseph (“his brothers were jealous of him,” NetB) and “Their jealousy led them to sell Joseph into slavery.”<sup>267</sup> Joseph was sold to a caravan of Ishmaelite who

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<sup>267</sup> Darrell Bock, 286.

transported him down to Egypt, where he was bought by an Egyptian officer named Potiphar. Through Joseph must of the Israelites entered Egypt and Joseph became a Governor in Egypt, God was with him. Wayne Jackson wrote, “A young lad, in a strange land, separated from his people and his center of religious strength – yet faithful to his God.”<sup>268</sup> God protection was upon Joseph.

The story of David, who became Israel’s king, is too well-known to need elaboration. Who among us, both as child and adult, has not thrilled to the narrative of David’s encounter with the devilish Goliath? What a breathtaking episode – the soldiers of Israel on one side of the valley of Elah, the defiant Philistine champion on the other. Morning and evening for forty days, Goliath had challenged Israel to combat, but they were frozen in fear (1 Sam. 17:10-16). When David arrived on the scene he was chagrined at the timidity of his Hebrew kinsmen, and volunteered to take on the infidel. But he was disdained as a mere “youth”—initially by King Saul himself, and then by Goliath (1 Sam. 17:33, 42). Never mind; God was with this “youth,” who may have been about twenty-two or so at the time. Goliath was slain and the Philistine force was routed.

## **Conclusion**

Youth/Young adults can accomplish outstanding things for God cause. But, fear of the unknown and the battering of some of the adults in our churches has hindered them from services to God. Our youth/young adults in our churches are being ignored as “empty-headed” or “never do well,” even when the Bible record through Prophet Joel that “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughter shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

men shall see visions” (Joel 2:29). Contrary to our believed, our youth/young adults, instead of finding solace in the church communities, resulted to finding solace in gang communities, drug and alcoholic communities, gun violence communities, robbery communities, stealing communities and armed robbery communities, and that is where youth/young adults are migrating to. We should not overlook this trend, because if we do, the future generation of youth/young adults will be a disaster!!!

Analysis of Pastor Francis Inofomoh “Exodus of Young Adults: The Spiritual Dimension” Pastor Francis Inofomoh explained the doctrine of the church. The doctrine of the church is the very foundation of the church. The Presbyterian Church believed that the Bible is the “written word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit and without error in the original manuscript.” The Bible is the revelation of God’s truth and is infallible and authoritative in all matters of faith and practice. Pastor Inofomoh presented two ways to view the spiritual dimension

- The Church (local assembly) as a whole.
- The young adults as an entity.

L. Roy Taylor (Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America), in his paper presented on July 6, 2011 on “perspective on Human Sexuality and Ordination” stated “ The Presbyterian Church of America general assembly has on several occasions expressed its position of seeking to minister the Good News of forgiveness to all people through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ teaching people to practice biblical standards of thinking, conversation and conduct through instruction on the Holy scriptures and in dependence upon the enabling grace of the Holy Spirit.

On a larger scale, we would like to find out if the local assembly is adhering strictly to the Bible. It is common knowledge that most churches in the United States and indeed the whole world, have taken Jesus out of their pulpits. The church depends on God for growth (I Cor. 3:6). Here, Paul declared “I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase.” Is Jesus the center of all that we do as a church? The youths need to know that Christ is the centered of the church. Is what they hear from the pulpit different from what they see done? Many young adults have seen this hypocritical attitude of some church leaders to be the reason why they should not be in church.

All over the nation, we hear of one scandal or the other involving “so called minister of the gospel and church leaders”. There has to be a re-orientation and complete re-dedication on the part of our church leaders or a deliberate re-visitation to the “old time religion.” The church has to be a praying church. We must seek God’s face in all things and at all times. The election of Matthias in Acts 2 was done after prayer and fasting as opposed to what we do today. The church has to develop such prayer activities as prayer vigils, intercessory prayers, prayer walks and prayer and fasting sessions. The young adults should be involved in all of this and they should also be encouraged to seek greater power of the Holy Spirit. The church also needs to get the youths fully involved in all of the church activities. I would recommend those activities that will build the spiritual man. Please do not get them involved in church politics. The youths need to be trusted and given full responsibilities with little or no adult control.

At a smaller level, the youths must make deliberate efforts to get themselves active and fully involved in the church activities. They should not forget their first love is for Jesus. We know that they are under tremendous influence from their peers. We also



know that the world is putting enormous pressure on them. This is why I advocate they seek greater enabling powers from the Holy Spirit. The young adults can also be involved in evangelism. The mass exodus of young adults from the church is one of the most serious problems we are currently facing in Christianity. The problem is compounded by lack of evangelism. The youth ministry should initiate a program aimed at winning back those who have left the church. Except in cases where some have moved out of the neighborhood, a majority of those who left the church live in the neighborhood and are well known to those still in the church.

In his quest to push the young adults toward evangelism, Pastor Inofomoh encouraged the young adults to look for “come back” drive program aimed at winning back those who have left the church. In his conclusion, he encourage both the young adults who has the greater task of getting the young people back to church, while the church is also encouraged as the greatest responsibility dwell on the church to keep the young adults’.

#### **Evaluation of Goal 1:**

The evaluation given for goal 1 was both from the site team and the participant in the seminar, conference and sermon. A complete assessment of the goal 1 was evaluated. Evaluation forms were provided to both adults and young adults ages 18-19. However, the Sound View P.C., young adults were up to 10, the evaluation given an “excellent” grade; more than 90%.

## **Result**

### **GOAL 2: Building a Team**

**Strategy 1:** Involvement of the Site Team. The first aspect of this demonstration project after my challenge statement was approved and we proceeded to the plan of implementation was to build the team that will help execute the plan that I had put together. I notified my friends who were also interested in my challenge statement and project. Then, together we build the site team. All members of my site team were involved in all process of this demonstration project; including some elders, such as Elder Mayphil Whyte, Elder Dr. Clementine Foy, Elder Dorothy FitzGerald, Deacon Canty Gregory, Deacon Blessing Etsekhume, Pastor Cleotha Robertson, Kadeem Marulaz; the youth president, Robert Reid, vice president of the youth ministry and Karisma Singley, the secretary of the youth ministry. Team building is the “cooperative work by a group.”<sup>269</sup> Although, some of the names mentioned above are not members of my site team, they help to implement the demonstration project.

**Strategy 2:** Define Members Role and Responsibility. The site team members at a phone conference held in March 2012, identified what role they will play; for instance, Rev. Sonja West was in charge of the seminar, Pastor Francis Inofomoh was in charge of the conference, Sister Patricia Mason Harrigan took care of the designing of the flyer, invitation, seminar and conference programs, Deacon Blessing Etsekhume was in charge of the organization of the seminar and conference, Sister Charlene Belfort was in charge of purchases, Elder Mayphil Whyte and Kadeem Marulaz (not a member of the site team) were in charge of influencing the young adults’ to attend the program and Pastor Cleotha

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<sup>269</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999), s. v. “London.”

Robertson was in charge announcement and lobbying church members to attend and also telling them of the importance of the project. The members were informed about the duration of the project.

**Strategy 3:** Involved All Members in Project Activity. Site team members were informed about meetings and the schedule for the meeting. Although, not all members attended the phone conference meeting, we deliberated by e-mail, text and phone calls. Sometime we meet at the SVPC, on the days of the seminar, July 21, 2012 and the day of the conference, August 18, 2012 we also have brief meetings at the end of each event.

**Strategy 4:** Acknowledgment of Reward for all Members. It is very difficult to give monetary rewards to friends who have gone out of their ways and out of their very tight schedule to meet your own demand. No monetary reward will be enough or account for their participation in the demonstration project. Their contributions towards the project, their ideas and some even used their money, shall not go unnoticed. I will continue praying for them. Sometimes, we get together at other functions, where we eat and drink; for example when I celebrated my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, all my site teams were invited and they honor my invitation.

**Evaluation for goal 2:** The site team performances during the duration of the project were evaluation by more than four others site team members. They were given an “Excellence” grade on the feedback form. (See feedback form on Appendix G and chapter 10 site team reports).

## **Results**

**GOAL 3:** The creation of the Education Process:

**Strategy 1:** The Team Anticipate Increase Participation. Base on the site team contributions and ideas towards creating an the educational process for SVPC Sunday school, I liaised with Pastor Cleotha Robertson on how to designed a new curriculum for the Sunday school. The Sunday school is further divided into age categories. Although, the Bible School has being in existence, there was no students coming in for Bible Study. Therefore, I was made the liaison between the Christian Education Committee and the Pastoral office. Pastor Robertson is also a member of my site team. We together drafted a new structure for the Bible class; age 3 – 5 to be in preschool, age 6 – 8 to be one class, age 8-10 to be another, age 11 – 15 to be another and the high class may join the adult Sunday school or join their own class which is the Junior and High School class. We also recruited teachers from the congregation and gave them a schedule. The Friday youth fellowship was also divided into age categories. The CEC and the youth ministry embrace the project. In order for the plan to be implemented, I always attended the CEC and I emphasis the importance having teachers on standby, so that whenever, the student are in church, a teacher must there to teach them. I also teach the adult Sunday school, Bible study and the Friday night youth fellowship.

**Strategy 2:** Research Design and Method: Methodology. Throughout the demonstration project some presentation were given that were not footnoted. Some statistics were used based on the Barna Group; *You Lost Me* and *unChristian*, Drew Dyck, *Generation Ex – Christian*, Rainer and Rainer, *Essential Church?* We also used library and internet services, we interviewed young adults and adults in SVPC and non-Presbyterian churches; we also did some phone interviews. We did the seminar and conference where we provided the participants pen, a copy of the book *Inspiration to Heaven* by Sunday

Etsekhume. We also provided food and drinks, snack, Ice Cream, we visited other churches and we did video recording of both the seminar and conference. The 4 set of the microphones we used at both the seminar and conference was presented to me by one member of the site team.

We designed flyers and invitations; we plan a Young Adults Community Evangelism Program for the youth ministry. Having gone to other non-Presbyterian Church, we find young adult uses their gift and talent in the media ministry, I thought that can be introduce in our church, because if our young people are engage in the service of the Lord they will find it difficult to leave. Then, on Sunday, January 6, 2013 in the service we announced some new ministries. The purpose is for the youth themselves to reach-out to other youths in our neighborhood, where New York Housing Development Project is in the majority. I propose bringing a friend from another church that will teach how to take photograph and video recording (I also presented a video camera to the youth ministry). A member of the church after seeing my enthusiasm presented me two set of Cannon photographic cameras. With the site team help, I also propose journal writing by the youth, which we shall publish in a newsletter, which is yet to be created. All these programs are made to the youth adult age 18-19 remain in the church and for other outside the church to join them.

**Strategy 3:** The Site Team Proposes Plan: Base on the research we did from going to other churches and the interviewed conducted on young adults' from non-Presbyterian churches, we brought the ideas to SVPC young people. Then, we introduced the plan, like photograph and video recording, media ministry, Journal, Newsletters, creating CD. The CEC, the Pastor, the Session and other church members are interested in the new created

programs for the youth ministries. The youth leaders never stop talking about the program.

**Strategy 4:** The Pilot Program: The team first prioritized the services of young adults in Sunday services. During the seminar on July 21, 2012 and the conference on August 18, 2012, participating churches were advised to engage young adults' in the Lord services, especially on Sunday Services. SVPC has started the Community Evangelism, which was introduced by the site team. Although, trips were been done by the SVPC young adults', we suggested more trip for them, because during my interview with some them, most of the young adults' complained of not getting enough traveling. We anticipated that the cause of not going on trips may be lack of funding, so we suggested that parents will pay part of the money for the trips, while the church will cover the rest cost. We also advised the Session that the church can received donation to help the cost of traveling. The suggestions of the young adults were taken into consideration. They suggested going on trips, movies, networking, balling, restaurant and a visit to other churches; for instance, the young adults' will be attending the "Presbyterian Church (USA) Youth Triennium 2013,"<sup>270</sup> which is scheduled on July 16-20, 2013. It is organized by the Presbyterian Church (USA), at Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Tennessee. The purpose of the Youth Triennium is for the youth in PC (USA) to know how to connect their lives with other youth and adults with activities that inspire them the youth in Presbyterian Church and to also build their faith. The cost of the trip is \$469.00 per person. So the team suggested that the church should pay part of the money, the parents pay some, while the

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<sup>270</sup> The Presbyterian Church (USA), "Presbyterian Youth Triennium 2013," [www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org](http://www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org) (accessed on January 11, 2013).

church can receive donation from the congregation. The team has succeeded in getting the young adults to be worship leaders, the young adults' choir, which was abandoned for almost a year is now, back to its stand. Teachers are been recruited for the Sunday school and the Friday night fellowship meeting. There was a situation that happens with one of the teachers. Elder Barbara Finney teaches the age 6 – 8 class. She came to her class waiting to receive the children, having prepared flyers for her students; unfortunately, no student came for Sunday school. Then, I suggested calling the parents and letting them know that we are in the church to teach the Sunday school, so that they can bring their children. If parents bring their children to church, the children will grow in the path of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6).

**Evaluation for goal 3:** Goal 3 evaluation for done by the Christian Education

Committee, the Youth Ministry and some members of the congregation. The overall comment on the demonstration project is very encouraging. Although, one cannot get everyone in the church to authentic there comment on paper, the evaluation is excellent.

**Result**

**GOAL 4:** Implementation of the Process:

**Strategy 1:** Research and Survey: The result of the survey is presented on both in data format and pie chart format (See Appendix J, K and L). Although, the pie chart gave a round figure; the result are the same. Our survey shows that out of the total numbers of SVPC congregation of 173, 29 people took the survey. Of the 29, 16.76% took the survey. The numbers of those who participated in the survey was not up to 1/3 of the congregation. However, the focus group, age 18-19 attendance was 10.34%, even though the survey ranges from age 16-19. Ages 41-50 was 24.14% and 51-60 were 13.79%

which also indicates that young adults' migration is something to be noted, but not to be ignore, while the future of SVPC will continue to be pioneer by adults. Although, ages 20-25 was 20.69% which shows that some college students still come to church, (see also survey on Appendix J and K). What are the reasons for the decrease in the number of the focus group, age 18-19? So many reasons were given by the youngsters. The question will be answer on the page for the reasons given by SVPC young adults for migrating from the church.

The result from the SVPC survey and questionnaire on those who are currently attending church were 17.24% and on those who are frequently attending church on every Sunday are 17.24%. These were the same people answer yes on the previous question. We are pleased at least to find that few of the young adults' age 18-19 were frequent in Sunday service, however this does not indicate their performance in the service. What this revealed is that most of the young adults' involved in the question were still coming to church with their mothers; with exception of only 3.44%, who come to church without their parents. On the question, why do they come to church? 17.24% said to worship and fellowship. To authenticate the youngsters view of worship is to be in church doing services while they are sitting at the back either chatting or discussing boyfriends and girlfriends and that is what they called fellowship. Sometime, when the preaching is going on this young adults' are there texting each other that is their means of communication, so there talking wouldn't disturb the services; smart kids. These same kids are the ones attending the Friday night fellowship meeting, attending youth functions, been part of the worship leader and participating in all youth functions. My fear is that their involvement may be too much and it may also become monotonous,



which if not careful may lead to migration. Although, they tried to fit-in where other kids are not forth coming, however, they may be incorporated in the service and into growing more spiritually, so that they will not also migrated like the rest. It is an advantage to the church if they can focus their teaching on conversion and discipleship, so that all the young adults' who think outwardly the church may have a "much better chance of retaining them inwardly."<sup>271</sup> The action is outside church, that is what the young people feel, however so many things can be done internally, which may be better than those things that they look on to and that is luring them outside the church. For example, young adults like partying outside the church; we may incorporate partying into the fellowship center, once in a while, without alcohol, so that it will give them a sense of belonging to the church.

How would rate your overall satisfaction with your church? 10.34% stated satisfied while 3.44% stated dissatisfied and the other 3.44% stated not sure. To the 10.34% that stated satisfaction, it should be noted that such young people may have something that they are attached to which gave them be satisfied with the church, however, if those attachment are taking away from them, they may be force to migrate. For instance, two young adults' migrated from SVPC to another church on Castle Hill, not too far from Soundview Avenue where SVPC is located. When I asked them why they left SVPC; their answer was that they don't like the music that choirmaster is always playing. They said that he is playing old fashion music, but they needed modern music. The same people complained about the choirmaster not ready to teach the young adult

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<sup>271</sup> Tom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III. *The Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 2008), 86.

choir any music. The church leader has to take into consideration the allegation levy against the choirmaster, that if the church want young people to be in the church.

Although, the two sisters didn't the choirmaster, they just decided to leave. The not so sure are in the same categories with the dissatisfied, because any little thing may trigger off the not so sure to dissatisfaction. One of the young people who have been in the young adults' choir has not been coming to church. She was frequent when the young adults' choir was still on; immediately the choir stops functioning she stop coming to church (see data on Appendix L).

**Strategy 2:** “Genogram”<sup>272</sup> of the churches. The historical of SVPC has been discussed (see chapter 1, geographical location and chapter 5, research question 1). However, according to the SVPC 75<sup>th</sup> Diamond Jubilee Anniversary, the number of children in the Sunday school was over 600, under Rev. Robert M. Davidson (1952-1961). Some of the CEC members complained that the current pastor has little or no influence on the young adults'. Although, the pastor engages young adults' in conversation through facebook, but the complainant are skeptical of his interest in the young people. Some complained that he never reach-out to them, even when some adults' leave the church for another, he does not care. For example, Ms. Brown who has two functioning young adults' in the church, as a matter of fact, both children were worship leaders in the church, recently, Ms. Brown said she is leaving SVPC for another church, the pastor was informed, but he never call the lady. I spoke with the lady, told her of my demonstration project, trying to persuade her to stay, so that her children will benefit from the program. Unfortunately,

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<sup>272</sup> Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A System Approach* (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2006), 38.

Ms. Brown left with her two children. Some members of the youth ministry also have some complaint against the pastor; he is not in good time with them. Instead of having meetings with them, I am the intermediary or liaison between his office and the CEC and the youth ministry. This type of relationship doesn't move the church forward. I have several times for reconciliation, but all my effort run into the rock. Leaders must strive hard to resolve any issues that they have against one another, because it does not build a healthy church.

**Strategy 3: Library Research:** The method of my research work was at the New York City Public Library, Burke Library at the Union Seminary, Columbia University Library, Fordham University Library, Online and Google. Book, articles, periodical and computer also serve as useful resources for my finding. For book and resources used you may refer to the footnotes and bibliography.

**Strategy 4: Show Movies:** Movies night is the last Friday of each month. Both young adults' and adults gathered to watch movies. The site team persuaded the adults to always show Christian movies that may give wisdom to young people. We have having different movies; some young people were advised to present movies for watching, but first an adult will see the movies before they are presented to the youth ministry. On Friday, July 27, 2012 we show the "Joyful Noise" to demonstrate the activities of the young adults in the movie.

**Evaluation for goal 4:** The evaluation for goal number 4 was excellent. Some of the youth ministry and the CEC applauded the ways I present myself in proceeding with the demonstration project and how I served as an intermediary between the Pastor, CEC and youth ministry. I praise God for his mercy which endured forever.

## **CHAPTER 5 EVALUATION PROCESS**

The evaluation of my Demonstration Project is focused on the challenge statement and the title, which is the primary concern of the migration of the young adults' age 18-19 from the Sound View Presbyterian Church. The evaluation was determined by four strategic methods, which are also part of the plan of implementation.

### **Method of evaluation 1: Visitation to other Non- Presbyterian Churches**

On June 24, 2012, we visited Featherbed Lane Presbyterian Church, the University Height Presbyterian Church and the Eastchester Presbyterian Church all in the Bronx and some non-Presbyterian Church, like Christ Apostolic Church in Manhattan and Christ Apostolic Church, Living Hope Chapel in the Bronx. We explore their services and saw the young adults participated at the service. Although, we spoke with some of the young adults, especially at both Christ Apostolic Churches, like Pastor Michael Oladubu, Deaconess Edemewan Okon (youth leader) and Christopher Adewusi Shogbonyo (musician) from CAC Living Hope Chapel and also at the CAC Manhattan we spoke with Brother Kehinde Babatunde (coordinator median ministry) and Elizabeth Ajayi (an adult choir). The Pastor of Featherbed Lane PC welcome us and embraced the idea, but could not come for the seminar and the conference, which was held on July 21, 2012 and August 18, 2012, However, CAC Living Hope Chapel and CAC Manhattan were duly represented and Pastor Brenda Perry and some of her member from University

Height PC participated at the conference. We created feedback forms which they used in the evaluation the demonstration project (See feedback form on Appendix I).

### **Method of evaluation 2: Conduct Young Adults' Conferences**

Invitations for the seminar and conference were sent to the Pastors of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches, young adults and leaders (See Invitation Card on Appendix C). The seminar, though did not start at the actually time scheduled, it did end at the appointed time. We spent almost 3 hours, while the conference started at 4:00 to 7:00pm. At the seminar and conference we had an interacting conversation, where the young people were able to speak-out their mind and expressed their own opinion. The seminar and conference were a breakthrough in the life of Sound View PC, as all those who attend gave "excellent" at the end of the events on the feedback evaluation.

### **Method evaluation III: Surveys and Statistical Analysis**

With survey and statistics we were able to know by numbers the remnant of the young adults' age 18-19 in this sample group in the Bronx PCs. In the questionnaires we presented, we discovered that not so many of the young adults ages 18-19 were in the BPCs. We also used quantitative research, questionnaires, and interviews to gather information (See Appendix, D, H, J, K and L). As mentioned in the method of evaluation 1, a survey of randomly selected churches, their pastors/leaders and young adults was conducted. Unfortunately, only SVPC youth leader, Brother Kadeem Marulaz and some SVPC young adults attended the seminar. Comparison was done by looking at the functions of the young people in the CAC compared to young people in the BPCs, we discovered also that there was no match in comparing SVPC and the CAC young adults. The CAC young adults' are always performing one thing or the other in their services;

they photographer, drummer, video recording, Ushers. We enjoined the BPCs leader to give the SVPC young adults' the chance to prove themselves by the use of their talents; probably they may do better than their counterpart.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **COMPETENCIES FOR THE JOURNEY**

**1. Theologian:** As a theologian, I focused my studies on biblical and theological reflections that are related and concern with young adults' theology, as it affects the church and the community its serve. I teach spiritual formation in the adults Sunday school and the Friday youth ministry fellowship to also developed cultural diversity, which we have been able to as Christians to address some of the racial issue that concern the young adults. The young people are now familiarizing themselves with each other cultures, especially; the young adults from Africa, Caribbean and the American-American. The barrier in language has been removed; they all fellowship together without shyness, intimidation or fear.

#### **Strategies:**

A. I used relevant literature; literatures that addresses issues concerning young adults' to teach the young adults'.

B. I used sermons, Bible study lessons and Sunday schools lessons and among others book, "ECHOES Adults Sunday School Pamphlets" by David C. Cook and other selected materials that are useful for the project, like *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity.. and Why it Matters* by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church: Personal Stories from a 10-year Study* by Roger L. Dudley and *Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them* by Ed Stetzer, Richie Stanley and Jason Hayes.

C. I always consult my pastor, Pastor Francis Inofomoh and Rev Sonja West, Kadeem Marulaz the SVPC youth president, Elder Mayphil Whyte, the coordinator of the SVPC youth ministry, the Christian Education Committee and the Site Team for their assistance and advice.

D. I also attended the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) the Leadership Development Conference held at the Brick Presbyterian Church, in Manhattan and some non-PC Anniversary concerning young adults’

E. I make the adults see reason why they should allow the young people in service, by bridging the relationship between them and the young adults. I also invited some African Churches young adults to established a relationship between SVPC their African churches, for example at the seminar and conference they advised to share with one another their theological perspective and the differences concerning their ministries and the Sound View PC youth ministry.

**Evaluation:**

A. I used feedback form to get evaluation from the pastors, young adults and leaders of the youth ministries (see feedback from youth ministry, Appendix H). Feedback helps to anticipate the direction of the project. We articulate the impact of the gathered theological information and the relevant to the SVPC. Although, the authors of the books we used cannot be reach, we engaged their books for study and some inspired literatures on young adults and that are also appropriate literature for the project.

B. I also used survey and questionnaires to evaluate my performance. The levels of young adults’ parental faith and the peer pressure involvement and how they affect their lives.



The questionnaire questions aimed at knowing the possible reasons for their migration (See questionnaire on Appendix D).

**II. Preacher:** As a Preacher, I did gave more than three sermons; spiritually and theological reflective of the challenge statement and sermons that concern the young adults. Although, not all the sermons were recorded, the last sermon, “Jesus made an open invitation to children” before the submission of this demonstration was done on January 27, 2013. I used my administrative skill in organization to persuade congregation to evaluate Jesus statement in Matthew 19:13-15.

**Strategies:**

A. I preached more than three sermons at the SVPC between November 2011 and January 2013.

B. Unfortunately, most of the sermons were not recorded on CD or DVD, but I made copies of the sermon, which I gave to some of my site team. I invited the BPCs, but none of them show up, Rev. Tony Delarosa, the Executive President of the New York City Presbytery and the Office Manager/Executive Administrator, Yzette Swavy-Lipton, from 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1600, New York, NY 10115-0240 were invited, but both of them could not come.

**Evaluation:**

A. As feedback from the sermons, the site team gave an “excellent” evaluation for the sermon, especially, the last sermon for the demonstration project. People from the PC Presbytery office in Manhattan, Evangelism and Church Development Resources Center could not come. Although, the President, Tony Delarosa told me that he will be traveling out of New York. The aim of the evaluation demonstrated that the sermons are reflective

of the demonstration project, which centered on preventing further migration of the young adults from the Bronx PCs, by involving and engaging them in the church activities. The evaluation also demonstrated the respond of the site team and some members of the SVPC.

**III. Spiritual Leader:** As a spiritual leader, though, Pastor Cleotha Robertson is in charge of the spiritual gift inventories, we developed an online inventories to identify spiritual gifts to developed impact the will have in the church. Some site team and I also did the spiritual gifts inventories. This may be used to transform the youth ministry and the congregation through spiritual development that will help me in my spiritual leadership journey.

**Strategies:**

A. I devoted more time in teaching the adults Sunday school and young adults on Friday fellowship meeting, even when I was sick, I tried to make it to church to enlighten the adults and the young people in spiritual development and use the Bible and other literatures that address such issues as my source. Among the book I used are the *Spiritual Life the Foundation for Preaching and Teaching* by John Westerhoff and *Disciplines of the Spirit* by Howard Thurman

B. I only interviewed one clergy, Pastor Francis Inofomoh who have was committed to spiritual formation, unfortunately, Barbara Austin-Lucas; a Professor of Spiritual Formation at the Nyack College Alliance Theological Seminary could not be reach.

**Evaluation:**

A. In order to be well inform and for responses to be accurate, I requested both oral and written feedback from participants.

B. I encouraged the young adults' attend the Friday Night Youth Program and to take the free online spiritual gift inventories; in order to measure their understanding of their gifts and to classify them in different groups based on the result of the spiritual gift inventories. However, some of them did not take the advantage, but we still divided them into group.

C. The Pastor of SVPC has been following up with the spiritual gift inventories. The pastor even extends the spiritual gift matter to the congregation. Some the young adults' using their gifts has become worship leaders.

D. I used the oral feedback from the interview in my personal spiritual growth and as well as inspired the young adults' to apply such to their personal spiritual growth and lifestyles.

IV. Agent of Change: As agent of change I developed my professional skills and gifts as a spiritual leader, a mentor, intercessor and a learner to impact the leaders and congregations SVPC. Base on my spiritual gifts and the demonstration project, members of SVPC do call me even at home to pray for them or someone they know.

**Strategies:**

A. I used relevant literature and materials, like the ones above that focus on congregational changes and spiritual transformational and leadership for my teaching the young adults.

B. I interviewed leaders of Christian Education Committee, Dr. Clementine Foy, Elder Mayphil Whyte and Elder Laverne Ramsay and the Pastors. I also engaged Pastor Brenda Berry of the University Height PC in a conversation about young adults.

**Evaluation:**

- A. I solicited feedback in written evaluation on congregational changes and how to create a healthy congregation. The site team gave their reports concerning the ministerial competency (see the report on chapter 10).
- B. I used information received from my interviews to personally develop my spiritual growth, which help in my demonstration project and lifestyle.
- C. During the conferencing, I used oral feedback from participants to encourage other participants to identify their spiritual gifts, which may help them in worked for the church.
- D. In feedback sessions, I encouraged the participants to identify the spiritual gifts that they are comfortable with and which they have been using in their areas of performances. Some young people mentioned that they will like to be drumming, playing organ, freelance writers.

**CHAPTER 7**  
**SITE TEAM COMPETENCIES REPORT ON REV. SUNDAY ETSEKHUME**  
**BY PASTOR FRANCIS INOFOMOH**

During the Demonstration Project, which I found to be very educative and informative, I personally have the following evaluation.

**AS A THEOLOGIAN:** Rev. Sunday as a theologian knows the importance of servant hood and absolute reliance on the Holy Spirit. His relationship with the Senior Pastor I would liken it to that between Elijah and Elisha. He follows the leading of the senior pastor. He also consults with leaders in the church and works very closely with the youth leader.

**REV SONJA WEST**

**AS A THEOLOGIAN:** Rev. Etsekhume's development as a theologian has been shaped by his reading and study of Scripture. He is also one whose theology truly informs every area of his life, in his triumphs and his trials. As a Sunday school instructor, preacher, and leader, he not only strives to communicate his understanding of God, but challenges other believers to think more deeply about their understanding of God, His nature, and their relationship with him.

**BLESSING ETSEKHUME January 5, 2013**

**AS AN THEOLOGIAN:** Rev. Sunday Etsekhume was able to accomplish what he proposed to do in his strategies, by using relevant literature to teach the young adults. Rev. Sunday Etsekhume also teaches the Adults Sunday school and on Friday nights, he

also teaches the young adults Bible study. He also had a good relationship with the pastor of Sound View Presbyterian Church, concerning the young adults and other leaders of the youth ministries. On top of that Rev. Sunday Etsekhume attends leadership conferences and the Bronx Presbyterian woman meeting and the Bronx Presbyterian Anniversary, where he passed out flyers concerning the young adults. As a theologian, Rev. Sunday Etsekhume uses the reflection of the Bible verses to teach and to counselor people. I grade him 100% for his achievement as a theologian and a teacher.

#### **ELDER MAYPHIL WHYTE 1/14/13**

**THEOLOGIAN:** He embody in teaching Jesus Christ in the Adult Sunday School every Sunday in the church. He helps to build the body of Christ as a caring and giving to the community. He uses current technology to enhance aspects of church programming and congregational life. Rev. Etsekhume gives himself completely to God through his call to ministry. The love of God is demonstrated in his daily activities. Rev. Sunday Etsekhume creates an environment which nurtures meaningful relationship among young people and between youth and adults characterized by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He manages a strategy for spiritual growth within the church in cooperation with the elders.

#### **PASTOR FRANCIS INOFOMOH**

**AS A PREACHER:** As a preacher, Rev. Sunday showed that he took time to prepare the message as he had a grip and the appropriate scripture to use. There was a flow in the message which was also relevant to the needs of the local assembly and the community. The exegesis of the Word by Rev. Sunday was professionally done.

**BLESSING ETSEKHUME January 5, 2013**

**AS A PREACHER:** Rev. Sunday Etsekhume gives spiritual sermons that are reflective to the concern of Bible logical of the young adults, he helped organized meeting to help bring the young adults closer to God conserving church matters and building up good relationship with God.

**SISTER CHARLENE BELFORT 1/13/13**

**AS A PREACHER:** Reverend Etsekhume is a very kind and compassionate person, who always aims for excellence in all of his endeavors. As a preacher, he chooses appropriate Bible verses to illustrate his sermon with such passion and eloquence that it is difficult if not impossible for anyone in the congregation to fall asleep. Reverend Etsekhume is an excellent preacher, who is forever mindful of God's omnipotence power, love and grace.

**PASTOR FRANCIS INOFOMOH**

**AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER:** As a spiritual leader, I believe that one should be able to guide the followers in such a way as to promote Jesus Christ. I believe this is what Rev. Sunday did not only with the message but also with his demeanor a relationship with the congregation.

**MAYPHIL WHYTE**

**SPIRITUAL LEADER:** He testified about his goodness to Jesus Christ pertaining to his illness. His ministry is a part of his life. His preaching moved the members of the congregation. He is very meek and lean not on his own understanding. He encouraged the young people to spend time in prayers and to study the Bible and asked for God guidance in everything. He has passion for God's ministry. Even when he was sick and was not able to speak, he humbled God's words, prayed not only for himself, but for

others. He reaches out to other ministers in the community and in other churches. Even in difficult times he never holds back his smile. He is willing to share his testimony as a source of inspiration to those who are weak and discouraged. He demonstrates the love of God. He can lead people to Christ in a comfortable manner. Rev. Sunday Etsekhume's ministry is part of his life. He continues to reach out and to implement difference activities to the young people that they could be involved in the church. He is involved in organizational faithfulness, goal setting and planning different ideas to motivate the young people to stay in the church.

#### **PASTOR FRANCIS INOFOMOH**

**AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE:** The main focus of Rev. Sunday's demonstration project is basically that of change. That is a change in the present state of affairs where youths are leaving the church to a situation where they start coming back or at least stay in church. His message also showed how we can all be our circumstances and individuals can be changed by the power of the gospel. He used the scriptures to buttress this fact and encouraged all to allow the gospel be the agent of change in their lives.

#### **REV. SONJA WEST**

##### **AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE**

The fact that Rev. Etsekhume has chosen to address the issue of the declining numbers of young adults in the church confirms that he is an agent of change. In looking at some of the issues affecting the church and the community at large, he has challenged himself and others not to accept the status quo. He should continue to not only bring these issues to the attention of others, but develop specific strategies for addressing such issues. He may



also want to consider broadening his network to partner with individuals and groups who are also working to address similar issues.

**ELDER MAYPHIL WHYTE 1/14/13**

**AGENT FOR CHANGE:** Rev. Sunday Etsekhume taught the Word of God, read and taught the scriptures and engaged the young people in study and witness. He conducted a Workshop for the young people motivating them to stay in the church. He lead the young people in discipleship and evangelistic outreach that others may come to know Christ and to follow Him. Rev. Etsekhume taught the young people to feel like a valued part of the church and the community.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **TRANSFORMATIONS**

“If the Lord does not build a house, then those who build it work in vain” (Psalms 127:1, NetB). Transformation comes as a result changes in nature and a complete change in status and appearance, which can also mean transfiguration. God is the only Lord who can completely change a human being. Since I have started this demonstration project, I have been completely transformed; in the way I view things, in the way I react to thing, in the ways I speak, in the I preached and in the ways my spirituality has grown. The most important of all the transformation is my relationship with the Sound Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry, the Christian Education Committee, the Session and the Pastor. I have also been transfigured; my appearance has change; people and church member said to me “Rev. Etsekhume you look different.” They did mean change in the negative, but change in the positive way. I also see change in the youth ministry, for example, Elder Mayphil Whyte, the coordinator of the youth ministry and also a site member write of me as an agent of change,

Sunday Etsekhume taught the Word of God, read and taught the scriptures and engaged the young people in study and witness. He conducted a Workshop for the young people motivating them to stay in the church. He lead the young people in discipleship and evangelistic outreach that others may come to know Christ and to follow Him. Rev. Etsekhume taught the young people to feel like a valued part of the church and the community.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Mayphil Whyte, “Rev. Sunday Etsekhume As Agent of Change,” Site Team.

The catalyst of the change is the demonstration project, which has brought light and life to SVPC. The chairperson of the Christian Education Committee, Dr. Clementine Foy who has spent over 54 years in the church, said to me “Rev. Etsekhume, we need more of the type of conference in the church. You are a blessing to this church.” Through this my demonstration project, I have impacted people lives, for example, Pastor Cleotha Robertson appointed me to be the spoke person between his office and the youth ministry and the Christian Education Committee. It was during the start of the demonstration project that I was nominated a member of the Session.

It is very important to state my experiences during my visitation to other Presbyterian Church and non-Presbyterian. I met with the Pastor Brenda Perry of University Height Presbyterian Church, Pastor Lonnie Bryant of the Feather Bed lane Presbyterian Church, Pastor Timothy Adelani of the Christian Apostolic Church and Pastor Michael Oladubu of Christ Apostolic Church, living Hope Chapel, one to mention a few. The pastors praise me for my effort in trying to get the youth together and that they will also do the same in church. Pastor Bryant has started gathering young adults for registration for the Bronx Presbyterian Churches Basketball Team, which will commence very soon.

He testified about his goodness to Jesus Christ pertaining to his illness. His ministry is a part of his life. His preaching moved the members of the congregation. He is very meek and leans not on his own understanding. He encouraged the young people to spend time in prayers and to study the Bible and asked for God guidance in everything. He has passion for God’s ministry. Even when he was sick and was not able to speak, he humble God’s words, prayed not only for himself but for others. He reaches out to other

ministers in the community and in other churches. Even in difficult times he never holds back his smile, he is willing to share his testimony as a source of inspiration to those who are weak and discouraged. He demonstrates the love of God. He can lead people to Christ in a comfortable manner. Rev. Sunday Etsekhume's ministry is part of his life. He continues to reach out and to implement difference activities to the young people that they could be involved in the church. He is involved in organizational faithfulness, goal setting and planning different ideas to motivate the young people to stay in the church. Faith has done it all. Jesus said,

If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this black mulberry tree, 'Be pulled out by the roots and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you (Luke 17:6, NetB).

My thanks go to God, who has strength, me. My experience which I have narrated before in the earlier chapter of the demonstration project is my testimonies. Twice I was confronted by Satan, which tried to stop me for starting the Doctor of Ministry program and when I was about completing the program. In a nutshell, in 2009, immediately, I was admitted in the Doctor of ministry program, I had a heart attack. Even while I was admitted at the Albert Einstein hospital, I prayed for God to grant me favor, so that I could start my program; and answered my prayer. In November 25, 2011 towards completing my demonstration project the devil rear his head; this time, he tried to stop me by implanting stroke on me. This time, Satan took my speech, by trying to make me speechless, but to God I give the glory, because if God open the way, nobody can close it. I pray and I prayed and Lord Jesus answered my prayers. He rescue and gave me victory over Satan. According Ms. Whyte, "Rev. Sunday Etsekhume, is willing to share his testimony as a source of inspiration to those who are weak and discouraged." My

spiritually, come as inspiration from God and reading the Bible, that is while I will continue to teach the Bible.

What is most interesting to me now, and it is giving me a lot of excitement, it's the new ministries and programs that this demonstration project has added to SVPC youth ministry. Through, the demonstration project I have added photograph taking, Video recording, Journal writing, Creation of Newsletter and the creation of Media Ministry. Every member of SVPC is excited, especially when on January 6, 2013 I announced the formation of the Youth Community Evangelism department. Although, all this programs, I cannot do all by myself, I need the service of all members, especially the Pastor of the church to make the programs come to fruition. I must not fail to measure my sermon at the SVPC on January 27, 2013, titled "Jesus Made an Open Invitation to Children." The sermon was another eye opener to the church. I was so grateful that the congregation was crowded, my site team were present and my advisor, Rev. Dr. Nancy Fields also honor my invitation to SVPC to listen to me bringing the Word. I listened to Rev. Nancy Fields after the sermon, when almost all the congregation stood up to give me the applaud; she said "What a powerful message. The Holy Spirit came down and I am blessed." Rev. Sonja West said to me, "I thank God Almighty for giving me the grace to be present for the sermon." Rev. West also sent an email and she wrote, "Thank you for inviting us to be a part of this special day. God bless you and your family." The message from that sermon has transformed the church; it has been another turn around for the church. People who have never say a word concerning the young adults in SVPC are now taking the issue of young adults very serious; for example, Sheila Vincent called me and the youth leader after the service and said to us "what are we going to do about the

young people. I am taking the message very serious.” I told her just support our young people. The Pastor, Rev. Dr. Cleotha Robertson is now making way to have a “Youth Talk” in SVPC.

I once again give thanks to God, because nothing can be done without Him giving me the grace to start and to complete the Doctor of Ministry Program; for “I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13, NetB).

### **My Recommendation for the BPCs**

- “Desperate time call for desperate measure;” The Bronx Presbyterian Churches should come together, first to acknowledge the fact that young adults age 18-19 are also migrating from the church.
- Effort to be made to attract and hold young adults attention. The young people that I interview talk about lack of love and care for them, adults are judgmental, insensitive to their need. The pastor and leaders should show love to everyone without preferential treatment to some of them, while the rest are careless about. Let the young people be one and in unity as Jesus Christ prayed for his disciples. Let them “become perfectly one” (John 17:23).
- Trying to attract them through program. The church is an adults oriented. The young people are waiting for the demise of those who they thought are standing on their way, after all they are almost in their 80s, so that they can take over from them. Young people also say the church is not a model for young people. Young adults know the programs they would like to embrace in the church. Effort is to be made to solicit their help in trying to include those program in the church activities or program. Involve them in the church service; they have

been complaining of the nonchalant attitude towards them, by not involving them in services. The church should endeavor to create program like the media ministry, photography ministry, video recording ministry, journal writing ministry; all this I have recommended to the SVPC.

- Not do as I say, but Do as I do. “Honesty is the best teacher.” To some young adults leaders of the church are not saying the truth. They do not do what they preached. This has been a big problem in the unchristian perception of the Christians.
- The worship section in the services is too cool for comfort. Young worshipper wants to themselves enjoy the services of worship. They also want to hear modern music in services. I was speaking to Nayema who said to me, the reason she left SVPC is that the musician keep on playing old music and that he doesn’t want to change the music and nobody is telling him to stop or to change the music. Of course young people should be incorporated in the church services; their interest should also be accommodated.
- Community Evangelism or An Outreach Program for the Young adults. This will enable the young adults to evangelize to their peers. Go out two by two or more on a Saturday to speak with their peers (not like the Jehovah Witnesses), but to create their own avenue. Instead of fellowshiping outside the church, they can be allowed to bring their peers to the church, but this is not in a negative way. There will also be an adult to supervise the program.
- Sunday school and Bible study. Everything is to be done with biblical principle in mind. The Sunday schools and Bible study play an important role in

the educational process. Without the Bible everything recommended would be of no use, because we must put Jesus Christ first as the center of the attraction.



## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A  
THE PROPOSAL**

**THE BRONX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES FUTURE LEADERS MIGRATING:  
CREATING A PROCESS THAT ENGAGES THE YOUNG ADULTS**

By

**SUNDAY JOSEPH I. ETSEKHUME**

**DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL**

New York Theological Seminary

February 1, 2012

## **Challenge Statement**

As Associate Minister of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), Sound View, Bronx, New York, I've notice the mass migration of young adults; 18-19 from the Bronx Presbyterian Churches (USA); the attendance rate has dropped almost 70%. Ignoring this problem will lead to the death of the church. This demonstration project will create an educational process that will engage and encourage the young adults to become more involved in the life of the church.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING**

The rising youth generation of young adults in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Bronx, New York has to be supernaturally ignited to flame the spiritual gifts and talent poured on them (Joel 2:28), in order to set our visions and the vision of the church beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> century and for God's purpose in our generation and the generation beyond to be well established. Their engagement; emotional and physical involvement would ignite and rekindle the already dying flame that only steam out vapor for the naked eyes, while in actuality, their absence in the church speaks out the gradual degradation that is now experienced in the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), Bronx. The Presbyterian Church (USA) in the Bronx comprises more than 17 churches.<sup>274</sup> From my observation, almost all the Presbyterian Churches in the Bronx are reflect this common problem of young adults' migration. Although, the migration of young adults from the Sound View PC (USA) is not peculiar to the Sound View PC., the universality and generalization of the problem has also drawn the attention of researchers. Teens, not only migrate to other churches, some leave the church for pleasures outside the church. On a recent research conducted by the Barna Group and published by David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving the Church and Rethinking Faith*, "some never return, while others live indefinitely at the margins of the faith community,

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<sup>274</sup> Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "List of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches," [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) (accessed November 9, 2011).

attempting to redefine their own spirituality.”<sup>275</sup> It is further revealed that young people "view churches as judgmental, overprotective, exclusive and unfriendly towards doubters. They also consider congregations antagonistic to science and say their Christian experience has been shallow.”<sup>276</sup> A young man of about 17 years old, whom I once engaged in a discussion, indicated to me that the reason for him hating the church and why he believed there is no God is due to the hypocrisy of pastors and preachers. He stated that pastors do not do what they preached, because they also are not sure of God's existence. I was wondering if this young man has read Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844-1900) book, titled, *God is Dead*.<sup>277</sup> However, from the view of the young adults and their reasons for their migration from the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), I envisioned the message which the young adults are sending to the church, which also reflects on the common concern of hypocrisy, which has also posed an authentic problem in church leadership. Listening to Kadeem Marulaz, the President of the Sound View Young Adults Program preached on “Why are You Pushing, Instead of Pulling,”<sup>278</sup> some of the problems and frustration of the teenagers surfaced in his sermon. The only way the silence of teenagers could be broken is to give them the opportunity to voice out their feelings. Kadeem sermon was filled with the question “Why? Why do have to speak to

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<sup>275</sup> David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leave the Church... and Rethinking Faith* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 15.

<sup>276</sup> Adelle M. Banks, “Teens Leave Churches Seen as Judgmental, Unfriendly According to New Book *You Lost Me*,” <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/09> (accessed October 15, 2011).

<sup>277</sup> Robert Brewer, *Postmodernism (1972-Present) in Postmodernism: What You Should Know and Do About It, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (NE, Lincoln: iUniverse, Inc., 2002), 15.

<sup>278</sup> Kadeem Marulaz, “Why are You Pushing, Instead of Pulling” (Sound View Presbyterian Church, 760 Soundview Avenue, Bronx, NY. October 23, 2011). Kadeem Marulaz Sermon at the 11.00am Sunday Service.

the child like that? Why do you have to think of yourself alone? Every time, it is Me, Me, and Me alone. Why must it be you alone? These were some of the questions that featured in the young man's sermon. It is obvious that Kadeem represents the feeling of most of the young adults in the church. To further buttress my point, after Kadeem's sermon, the young adults and their cohorts stood up in standing ovation to salute the young preacher and to buttress their points. The Barna Group further indicated that "Five young Christians," who represented about 59 percent of their researched population "leave church life either permanently or for extended period of time after age 15."<sup>279</sup> The researchers also stated that "one in four 18 to 29 years old [claimed that] "Christians demonize everything outside of the church," while "one in three said church is boring."<sup>280</sup> These allegations by teens against the church, stem from church leaders' attitude towards young adults in churches, which though now sprang up were unopposed in the centuries before or in the era of modernity. However, postmodernism, which is an ideology built on modernity, but opposes modernity in practice, is critically sending a message to the church to revise the way church is been done. Robert Brewer in articulating his comprehensiveness of postmodernism writes that,

The 20<sup>th</sup> century to the postmodernist, was anything but the utopia that was envisioned by rational thinkers of the Modern era. In fact, not only are they disillusioned by the primary tenets of modernism, they treat its concept with contempt.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Adelle M. Banks, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/09> (accessed October 15, 2011).

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Robert Brewer, 10.

The teaching of the postmodernist is the teaching that the world is free, harmonious, “utopia” and that one can make out of the world whatever one desires, provided that we have the materials to build upon. However, Robert Brewer argues that the postmodernists are “disillusioned” by their understanding of modernism, which their ideology and concept tend to eradicate. Young adults are mostly the operative instruments and tools for postmodernism. Their interpretation of postmodernism is now mostly in technology, which they now use as their voice. Kinnaman also indicated that “...the worldview for young adults is changing in significant ways, such as their remarkable access to the world and worldviews via technology...”<sup>282</sup> Technology is taking the place of human conventional wisdom on our young adults. Obviously, the age when teenagers are classified as children is past. They looked at themselves as adults and mature, which in retrospect gives them the impetus to want to do things themselves without any guidance, except in technological guidance.

The story of Chuck Frye, who died at the University of Arizona School of Medicine while studying, also poses the question asked by the young man that came to our church, who asked me, that “if God truly exist why do bad things happen to people?”<sup>283</sup> To be very skeptical of the young man's question and admonition, which though I did not find fascinating. I thought of other young adults that may be having the same mind set as the young man and the question on doubting God in time they have to prove a point. Chuck, while in school thought about his calling to work for God and decided to entertain his feeling to “forgo high-tech medicine in some lucrative setting in

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<sup>282</sup> Adelle M. Banks, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/09> (accessed October 15, 2011).

<sup>283</sup> James Dobson, *Life on Edge* (Dallas, Texas: World Publishing, 1995), 243.



favor of service on a foreign field."<sup>284</sup> Chuck, before he graduated has desire to work in the missionary field, but Chuck died of leukemia. Unfortunately, before his death, Chuck was engage to marry his fiancée Karen Ernst, who was also a devoted Christian, the question "Why," would death take Chuck away? This question will never be answer until we know the mind of God. James Dobson said, "The Lord clearly said "No" to them all, but why?"<sup>285</sup> This also indicates that the Lord did not respond affirmatively to all the prayers that were said, in order for Chuck's to stay live. James further illustrated the usefulness of Chuck's profession if he had survived the leukemia. James stated that "Chuck could have treated thousands of poor and needy people who otherwise would have suffered and died in utter hopelessness. Not only could he have ministered to their physical needs, but his ultimate desire was to share the gospel with those who had never heard this greatest of stories. Thus, his death simply made no sense."<sup>286</sup> So many death and situation that befall humanity make no sense when they are put into perspective; for example, the armed Robber would go into people's houses, and eliminate an entire family; a drunkard driving while intoxicated would eliminate another person by causing accident. God is present in all such situations. This has also been a problem of inconsistencies leveled against the church, which is another reason why teenagers are not fully participatory in church. There are many questions of "why" that is not answerable, however, "God's purpose in this young man's demise is a mystery, and there it must

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>286</sup> James Dobson, 244.

remain."<sup>287</sup> One significant lesson I've learned on my relationship with God is to meditation, prayer and contemplation to have solitude and reflection communion with God, because nobody can answer the question about death.

The problem of the young adult migration is common to the over 17 Presbyterian Churches in the Bronx;<sup>288</sup> The First of Throggs Neck PC., E-Tremont Ave., Fourth PC. Newbold Ave., Laconia Community PC., Laconia Ave., Bedford Park PC., Bainbridge Ave., Sound View PC., Soundview Ave., El Buen Pastor-Mid Bronx PC., Grand Concourse, Fort Schuyler PC., Dewey Ave., St. Augustine PC., E 165<sup>th</sup> St., San Andres PC., Soundview Ave., Eastern Korean PC., Newbold Ave., University Heights PC., University Ave., Featherbed Lane PC., Featherbed Lane Ave., Riverdale PC., Henry Hudson Pkwy, Beck Memorial PC., E 180<sup>th</sup> St. First William-Bridge PC., E 225<sup>th</sup> St., and the Eastchester PC., on Fish Ave. All this churches<sup>289</sup> reflect and demonstrates the common problem of the young adults' migration. How can the migration problem be curbed, so that it does not stiffen the affected churches to death is the focus of this Demonstration Project, using the Sound View Presbyterian Church as the center of my research.

As Associate Minister of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), Sound View, Bronx, New York, I've notice the mass migration of young adults; 18-19 from the Bronx Presbyterian Church (USA); the attendance rate has dropped almost 70%. Ignoring

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>288</sup> Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "List of Bronx Presbyterian Churches," [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) (accessed on November 9, 2011).

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

this issue will lead to the death of the church. This demonstration project will create a process that will engage and encourage the young adults to become more involved in the life of the church.

The feasibility in the proliferation in the young adults' migration from the Sound View Presbyterian Church could result to a great decline in the membership. This if not curtail could also lead to the eventual death of the churches and the lost of the young people to the world. Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III, in also identifying the problems of young adults' migration from the church, stated that "more than 2/3 of young churchgoing adults in America drop out of church between the ages of 18 and 22."<sup>290</sup> On the contrary the engagement of the young adults and their commitment would spearhead a great awakening that will create a transformed society in this generation and the generation beyond. Gary Lindley writing on "evangelism and church growth," stresses the importance of young adults' involvement in the ministries.<sup>291</sup> The response to Lindley questions on how to engage young adults, in the ministry, could also be found in the plan of the organization to encourage young adults.<sup>292</sup> However, the ways to effectively reach out to young adults' in churches could be by the gospel by also helping "to move youth and young adults from membership to discipleship."<sup>293</sup> This measure would inculcate the gospel teachings in the heart of the young adults and also make it impossible for them to

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<sup>290</sup> Sam S. Rainer III and Thom S. Rainer, *Introducing the Essential Church in Essential Church: Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group 2008), 2.

<sup>291</sup> Gary Lindley, "The Central Texas Conference," [www.ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1510](http://www.ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1510) (Texas, Fort Worth: Published by The Center for Evangelism & Church Growth, 2011). Gary Lindley is the Executive Director at the Center for Evangelism & Church Growth (accessed November 16, 2011).

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

deviate from the teachings (Proverb 22:6). Lindley, further indicated that the "... cluster groups and local congregations [would] help them to identify opportunities, understand the culture and to reach youth and young adults."<sup>294</sup> The young adults, mostly thirst for mentorship, however, the willingness of the adults to mentor young adults also depend on the willingness of the young adults to accept mentors, because it is difficult for an adult to volunteer to be a mentor, while there is no willingness on the mentee to be mentor. The migration of the young adults from the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) in the Bronx has been of a great concern to many church leaders within the organization, who has tried effortlessly, but fruitlessly to overcome this migration problem. The problem now calls for urgent strategies, policies and process that will curtail the young men and women and at the same time hinders further migration. Although, church leaders are aware of this problem, and some of them have policies and programs that could control the flow, however, "policies and programs could not dictate specific actions and procedures but instead should provide the resources to enable effective action that is appropriate to particular places."<sup>295</sup> What is the effectiveness of a policy and strategy if it is only theoretical? All policies and strategies that will transform young adults must be put into practice, in order to get good results. Policies and strategies, if not implemented are just paper work, but if they are implemented, whether good or bad, the result may influence certain aspect of the organization if not the entire organization.

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<sup>294</sup> Gary Lindley, "The Central Texas Conference," [www.ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1510](http://www.ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1510).

<sup>295</sup> Ernest T. Stringer, "Research in Professional and Public Life" in *Action Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oak, California: Sage Publications, 2007), 3.

The Presbyterian Church (USA), which is the body under which the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) rest, mission reflects upon the activities of the church; both locally, nationally and internationally. The mission of the church is as follows:

The particular church carries a vital responsibility in the mission of the church. There God's people perform especially the ministries of worship, proclamation, sharing the Sacrament, evangelism, nurture, counseling, personal and social healing, and service. Without this basic ministry to persons, neighborhoods, and communities, and the support given at the congregational level through prayer, personnel, and money, any other significant ministry of the church becomes impossible. Congregations serve as essential mission arms of the presbytery and of the larger church.<sup>296</sup>

The Presbyterian Church was founded by John Calvin (1509-1564), as a result of the division in Protestantism, which led to the formation of the Martin Luther Lutheran and John Calvin's Reformed or Presbyterian.<sup>297</sup> In 1536, twenty-seven year old Calvin became the leader of Presbyterianism.<sup>298</sup> Although, Calvin was made famous by the publication of his famous "Institutes of Christian Religion,"<sup>299</sup> his "main interest was in Jesus Christ as God come in human flesh."<sup>300</sup> The notion that Jesus Christ is both God and human could be anticipated by the work and words of Jesus within the framework of both his eternal being and human existence as reveal by God in the salvation history.<sup>301</sup> It

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<sup>296</sup> The Presbyterian Church (USA), "The Particular Church," in *The Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Part II 2009/2011* (Louisville, Kentucky: The Office of the General Assembly, 2009), G-7.0102.

<sup>297</sup> Lefferts A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians: With a New Chapter by George Laird Hunt*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 23.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, *John Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 25.

was in Geneva that John Calvin developed the idea of Presbyterian Church government,<sup>302</sup> which today has become a symbol of emulation by other denominations. Calvin created positions for “four types of church officers: Pastors, Teachers, Elders and Deacons.” The New Testament recognizes these offices as those who will serve for the perfecting of the ministry and for the edifying of the congregation for the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12). These positions are all equal. There is no office of a bishop that is superior to other offices, and to administer the church government, twelve “lay-elders” were to be elected by “civil magistrates” among their own members.<sup>303</sup> This Presbyterian Church administrative system is written in the Book of Order, which is also known as the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). However, in 1692, the first legally recognized Presbyterian congregation in America was formed near modern Norfolk in Virginia.<sup>304</sup> Cotton Mather, “a prominent New England Puritan,”<sup>305</sup> could not be forgotten in the history of the Presbyterian Church in New England. He estimated that between 1620 and 1640, 4,000 out of 21,000 Puritans in New England held “Presbyterian theories of church government,”<sup>306</sup> which also means that the Puritans who are from England already had John Calvin’s ideology on the Presbyterian Church Government before coming to America. Therefore, their knowledge of Presbyterianism helped encouraged and maintained the Presbyterian Church in Connecticut. Lefferts A. Loetscher also stated

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Lefferts A. Loetscher, 25.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

that during the 1640s, Long Island also witnessed the advent of about eight Presbyterian Churches; where Francis Doughty and Richard Denton “were among the earliest Presbyterian ministers”<sup>307</sup> at the churches. In 1685, French Huguenots also founded a church in Staten Island.<sup>308</sup> Although, Presbyterian churches did not flourish in New York City, until between 1667 and the 1700s that about ten or fifteen Presbyterian Churches started operate in New York and New Jersey.<sup>309</sup> Francis Makemie will forever be remembered in the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, because he was the architect in the formation of the “first Presbytery”<sup>310</sup> in America. Although, Presbyterian churches were scatter all over the country; the Presbytery were only from congregations in Maryland, Delaware and Philadelphia.<sup>311</sup> It was the aftermath of the result of the increase in the sizes of the Presbytery that later encouraged the formation of the “General Synod” in 1716. The four presbyteries under the General Synod were located in Long Island, Philadelphia, New Castle and Snow Hill. However, with the increase in the Presbyterian Churches and population in America, between 1830 and 1861, the demonic forces of slavery were allowed to divide the church. Although, slavery which is considered a deprivation of human authentic existence (my words), was rejected in 1818, by the General Assembly. In the adoption of the motion that rejected slavery the General Assembly stated that: “We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 62.

by another ... utterly inconsistent with the law of God ... and ... totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ.”<sup>312</sup> This strong condemnation of slavery was opposed by the proponents of the ungodly acts and those who had already started enjoying the profit from slavery; therefore, there was division in the Presbyterian Church.

In 1861, the Southern block of the Northern body withdrew from its Synod because the 1837 division in the Presbyterian Church was also caused by theological and doctrinal matters. The church split to almost two equal parts, but the denominations maintained the same name; The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In 1857, the disagreement on the issue of slavery, led to the breakaway of the Southern constituency, which later formed The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America at this time the Presbyterian Church has now divided into three separate bodies. One of the bodies comprises churches in both the North and South and the 1857 break-up caused the formation of another Presbyterian Church in the South. Those who did not support the slavery issue show their “Concern for humanization leads at once to the recognition of dehumanization.”<sup>313</sup> The church now has three different entities in the North and South bearing the same names of the North political sentiment and proclamation as it related to the "Federal cause" and support for the "Union to sentiment," which the South was opposed to. The Presbyterian Church is now divided into four congregations. In 1958 the Presbyterian Church in the United State of America

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid. 94.

<sup>313</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: New Revised 20<sup>th</sup>-Anniversary Edition* (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1993), 25.



and the United Presbyterian Church of North America merged to form The United Presbyterian Church in the United State of America.<sup>314</sup> The Presbyterians Church (Northern) and Presbyterians Church in the United State (Southern), however, 1977 did have an agreement to work together. On June 10, 1983, the former United Presbyterian Church (UPC) in the United State of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United State (PCUS) reunited to become the Presbyterian Church (USA). In a current population of about 2.5 million people serving under an estimated 11,260 congregations,<sup>315</sup> in the United States of America alone, summed up its mission in a few words; “Compassion, Peace and Justice; Evangelism and Church Growth, Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries...; Stewardship, Theology, Worship and Education; Vocation World Mission.” The PC (USA) through her branches and with over 1,721 memberships in the Bronx<sup>316</sup> has been involved in a worldwide project in every Community, State, Country and Continent.<sup>317</sup> While the ministry of worship and proclamation has been very outstanding, the church activities worldwide also reflect the stanch stand of the church beliefs. It also reflects PC (USA) concern on matters regarding the “Word” and the interpretation, which also reflects on the ministries of social justice. The ministry of social justice has also been a core factor in the administration of PC (USA) various policies and programs without sentiment to people of all races.

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<sup>314</sup> Lefferts A. Loetscher, 148.

<sup>315</sup> New Monmouth Presbyterian Church, “The History of Presbyterian Church” in “New Monmouth News,” [www.newmonmouthpres.org](http://www.newmonmouthpres.org) (Lexington, Virginia, New Monmouth Presbyterian Church, 2011) (accessed on March 21, 2011).

<sup>316</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), “Comparative Statistics, Annual Editions 1999-2009,” [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) (accessed November 9, 2011).

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

The policies and programs executed by the Presbyterian Churches in the Bronx would be far better if they are reflective of the need of the communities. The Presbyterians Churches in the Bronx have collectively coordinated and executed the mission of the PC (USA) in their individual capacity in various communities where they are situated. The Sound View Presbyterian Church, located at 760 Sound View Avenue, Bronx, NY 10473, though small in size has been a colossal testament in the life of its community; through its various programs and community outreach programs; especially in the areas of its “Food Pantry,” “Senior Citizen” and “Nursing Homes.” The church mission is to present Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to the world and to also present the life of Jesus Christ in the following manner as stated in its mission statement, which read as follows:

Sound View Church glorifies God by celebrating God’s presence in worship; gathers together to create a Christian family composed of all people; grows and educates God’s people through discipleship; gives back to others in service to demonstrate God’s love; [and] goes out to communicate God’s Word through evangelism.<sup>318</sup>

Even with a small congregation of about 157,<sup>319</sup> the Sound View Church Youth Ministry has been very lively and dynamic. The youths have always participated in programs and activities organized in the Bronx under the auspices of the Presbyterian Churches in the Bronx. Apart from the Presbyterian Church (USA) mission, the different churches under this body could carve out their own mission statements from the general mission of the church. However, while the youth ministries in the churches associated with the PC

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<sup>318</sup> Sound View Presbyterian Church, “Mission Statement” (Bronx, NY: compiled by Pastor Cleotha Robertson; Pastor in charge, 2008).

<sup>319</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), “Comparative Statistics, Annual Editions 1999-2009” [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) (accessed on November 9, 2011).

(USA) struggle very hard to implement some of their policies that promote programs due to limited manpower and resources, the young adults are tired of the non-excitement that is now characterizing the church;<sup>320</sup> “lifelessness” and “laziness,” therefore, they are departing the churches for excitements elsewhere. The activities of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), as indicated in its mission statement,<sup>321</sup> which shows practically the functions of the church, in relation to its members and non-members (community), includes the support the church is giving to its community and church members. On Wednesdays, the church opens its pantry doors for the community and on Thanksgiving, the door is also open for all who want to come. There is no discrimination against non-members. The Thanksgiving Holiday activity is very interesting; personally, I have participated in this program, where we served food to more than 250 people who walk-in into the church for food. One of the important missions of the church is evangelism. On the third Sunday of each month, apart from other community activities, which the church is engage in. The church is also committed to going out to the street, doing street evangelism and this has also been part of the ministry which I am engage in. The Sound View Presbyterian Church, in collaboration with some other churches in the Soundview community has been involved in some outreach programs, like Marching for Jesus, Reaching Out to our Community in Prayer: United We Stand as a Body of Christ. These are programs that have been used to conduct revivals and also evangelized the community. The church is also engage in the Senior Citizen programs, Nursing Homes, Hospital visitations, Home visit and Drugs and Alcoholic Addiction Programs for both

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<sup>320</sup> Adelle M. Banks, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/09> (accessed October 15, 2011).

<sup>321</sup> Sound View Presbyterian Church, “Mission Statement.”

male and female, members and non-members. The mission is not limited to performing these mentioned programs.

This Demonstration Project would create a process that will further encourage the young adults of the Sound View Presbyterian Church to make the church community their friends, by creating awareness, which will also demonstrate the usefulness of the young adults in the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA). This project will also be a useful tool for other churches to reflect upon for the empowerment of the youth in PC (USA) and the benefit of the communities.

However, the visibility of the effect of the continue migration is notice in the decline of the young adults' in the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) and other Bronx Presbyterian Churches. John was diverged millions of "dechurched" America, but later unchurched America.<sup>322</sup> At the Sound View Presbyterian Church, the young adults are rarely seen in services and those of them that attend services drag their feet. In the young adults' choir, they are sometimes only two numbers out of about 15-20 of them and sometimes those of them that attend services sits at the back-row of the church chatting and texting, not minding the preacher and the services. Ms. Laura Obani, not a member of our church, once visited the Sound View PC, but when she was living she asked me, "But where are the youths in this church?"<sup>323</sup> I told her that some of them are in a room rehearsing for the service. Then she said to me, that "there are so many elderly people in this church." True! However, she could not stay to see even the young adults as

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<sup>322</sup> Sam S Rainer III and Tom S. Rainer, 2.

<sup>323</sup> Laura Obani, "Concern for Teenagers." Laura Obani, a visitor of Dr. Udo Ekanem, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), in 2010, expressed concern on the dominance of elderly people in the service of the Sound View PC (USA).

they reluctantly walk into the sanctuary for service. This has helped raised my curiosity on what will be the future of the young adults attendance and the future of the Sound View PC (USA); will the future generation of young adults be able to maintain the future of the church? Or will the church continue existence be paramount if left in the hands of the present category of young people that have already showed disdain in their attitude towards the church? The frustration in the teenagers could be expressed in what Kirk Franklin wrote in his book, *The Blueprint: A Plan for Living Above Life's Storm*. In the "Introduction," Kirk metaphorically illustrated the frustration in young people. He stated;

Imagine waking up Christmas morning and receiving an expensive gift under the tree. It's nicely wrapped, beautifully presented. You tear off the paper, dig through the little Styrofoam peanuts, and find the gift. But it needs assembling. So you continue to dig. You dig and dig until frustration sets in. When you finally get to the bottom of the box, there's no instruction manual. So now you're left with lots of pieces spread out all over your floor and you have no directions for putting them together.<sup>324</sup>

From the illustration above, youngsters quest for leadership guidance could very well fit into the categories. The youngsters at the Sound View Presbyterian Church are happy when they are in their group meetings; however, they anticipate a situation where there is an authentic guidance, "instruction manual," which would be a guide to their own effectiveness. Yet, because they are deprived of the "instruction manual," leadership guidance, which would have serve as a guide or directive for their capabilities, which they lack, they get frustrated, unable to put their ideas together. Thus the reason for the

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<sup>324</sup> Kirk Franklin, *The Blueprint: A Plan for Living Above Life's Storm* (New York, NY: Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 2010), IX.

“lots of pieces spread out all over [the ] floor [with] no direction for putting them together.” This is a call for the search for “effective leadership”<sup>325</sup> in our churches.

In February, 2011, my church; the Sound View Presbyterian Church, held a workshop for the Bronx Presbyterian Churches, coordinated by Elder Mayphil Whyte of the Sound View Church, titled “Youth and the Church,” but to my amazement, only few young adults that falls within ages 18 and 19 years attended the program. The most surprising thing of all is that even most of the youths in the host church did not show up. This is a very critical situation for the church and the community. My fear for my church is that the future of the church rest heavily on the youth, who are foreseen to be future leaders of the church. However, it would not be meaningless if these future leaders are trained on church leadership, rather than allowing them to waste away in communities engulfed by violence. Rainer and Rainer III, also see the problems of the youngsters as causing the church to flounder. They wrote, “The average church is losing the younger generation, and those young adults are not returning.”<sup>326</sup> It is apparent that the youngsters have found a new love, which is luring them away from the church. Their exodus is causing the church to be “stagnant,” as the church has no feature of continuity, because of the dominance of the aged in services.<sup>327</sup>

With this project I will examine the biblical, economical, social and political implications of the migration of young adults from the Sound View Presbyterian Church

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<sup>325</sup> Steve Echols, “Transformational/Servant Leadership: A Potential Synergism for an Inclusive Leadership Style.” *Journal of Religious Leadership* Vol. 8, No. 2 (Fall 2009): 85.

<sup>326</sup> Sam S. Rainer III and Thom S. Rainer, 8.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

(USA). I will also examine the various reasons for the young adults' less commitment in the church and in the things of the Lord and what has made them so evasive in the church. I will also examine ways by which we can engage the young adults more in the church and community. One of my methodologies will be to first educate the young adults about the importance of the church in the community and their expectations, if they could be participatory. Gene Getz, writing about "principles from the teachings of Jesus" and indicating "Economic Awareness," stated that "we should develop an awareness of the economic structure and practices in every culture in which we're attempting to communicate God's truth so we can use these economic experiences to teach people spiritual truths."<sup>328</sup> Simplifying the reality in Jesus teachings, by making his teachings on wealth reflect in actuality his uncompromising position on amassing wealth fraudulently, young adults will also have to be taught lessons on the economic importance of the church. Young adults will also have to be "taught the values of integrity, honesty, and morality in business without attacking the over economic structures that formed the bulwark of society."<sup>329</sup> When I was growing up, Reverend Fathers and Pastors teachings and preaching were mostly based on Christians and their reward in heaven (II Timothy 4:7-8). I was always wondering why Christians would not earn their reward on earth, but only to earn it when they are dead and in heaven. I believe that this type of preaching would be of great importance to young adults, if the truth about economic importance is preached in church and to also let the teenagers aware that

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<sup>328</sup> Gene Getz, *Principles from the Teachings of Jesus in Rich in Every Way: Everything God says about Money and Possessions* (West Monroe, Louisiana: Howard Publishing Co., Inc., 2004), 84.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 85.

been a Christian does not mean poverty. I also intend to form a church community of young adults using the young adults of the Sound View Church as the contact point to influence other young adults in the Presbyterian Churches and communities. I will also conduct interviews with church members, pastors and leaders of the churches that are involved, so as to maintain a standard within the church. Another strategy, that I have planned to adopt, which I have already applied to the concept of implementation is restructuring the Youth Ministries into age categories. This I have already started at the Sound View PC (USA).

The theology of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is reflective of how its various ministries are run. An active church is active because of the involvement of her members; those that are gifted and are willing to spiritually and physically engage in the church activities with the use of their gifts to edify the church. On the contrary, an inactive church could be because of the dominant sleeping personnel, (inactive members) that are waiting to be woken up from their yet siesta stages. Some of the Bronx Presbyterian churches have been functioning without pastors. The process of ordination of pastors in the Presbyterian Church (USA) also could make it difficult to have pastors in some of the churches. First, the persons seeking ordination has to be approve by the Pastor In-charge, after which they become an inquirer “for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate.”<sup>330</sup> The process and purpose of the “Inquiry Phase,” which may take forever, or which is at the mercy of the Pastors, Session and Church Communities is “to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe

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<sup>330</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), “Time Requirements” in the Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Part II, 2009/2011 (Louisville, KY: The Office of the General Assembly, KY. 2009), G-14.0403.



themselves called to ministry of the Word and Sacrament to explore that call together...”<sup>331</sup> On the other hand, the “Candidacy Phase” prepares the persons “to serve the church as ministers of the Word and Sacrament.”<sup>332</sup> The “Inquiry Phase” and “Candidacy Phase,” though are requirements for pastoral ordination, the flaw also attached to the requirements, is that candidates who are not the favorites of some pastors may never be referred to the Presbytery for ordination. Even with this identifiable problem, the churches have been functioning with assigned leaders, who has been carrying out pastoral responsibilities without been paid as pastors.<sup>333</sup> Therefore, their performance is hindered by lack of pastoral status. Although, the pastors cannot overturn the plight of the young adults overnight, churches need pastors and leaders that will impact knowledge on the young adults, by their identifiable communication abilities that can particularly influenced, especially the young adults. “Jon Heinly, youth minister for Lancaster (Pa) Mennonite Conference and at Lancaster Mennonite School,” at a conference on “Web Exclusive: What do young adults expect from pastors?”<sup>334</sup> Indicated, that “young adults would tend to value discipleship, mentoring and counseling during college, career and marriage transitions.”<sup>335</sup> Pastors, with the interest of young adults at heart, will be more creative in their abilities to grow and develop teenagers by

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid., “Inquiry Phase” in the Book of Order, G-14.0404.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., “Candidacy Phase” in the Book of Order, G-14.0405.

<sup>333</sup> Mayphil Whyte, “The Bronx Presbyterian Churches without Pastors.” The conversation I had with Mayphil Whyte on March 21, 2011. Ms Whyte is an Elder in the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), the coordinator of the SVPC Youth Ministry and the representative of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches Women.

<sup>334</sup> Anne Groff, “Web Exclusive: What do young adults expect from pastors?” [www.themennonite.org](http://www.themennonite.org), 2009-09-15 issue, 1 of 5 (accessed on November 20, 2011).

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

empowering them spiritually and theologically through “discipleship” and filling the gap, which is created by their absentee parents through mentoring.

The Bronx Presbyterian Churches are located in the four cardinal points of the Bronx compass. The First of Throggs Neck PC (USA), Fourth PC (USA), Eastern Korean PC (USA), Laconia Community PC (USA), Bedford Park PC (USA), St. Augustine Church PC (USA), Tremont PC (USA), Beck Memorial PC (USA), Eastchester PC (USA), First of Williams-Bridge PC (USA), Fort Schuyler PC (USA) and El Buen Pastor-Mid Bronx PC (USA) are situated in the East of the Bronx; while the Sound View PC (USA) and San Andres PC (USA) are in the South Bronx. The University Heights PC (USA), Featherbed Lane PC (USA), and the Riverdale PC (USA) are located at the West side of the Bronx. Almost half of the Bronx PC (USA) are without pastors; Beck Memorial P.C., Bedford Park PC., Fort Schuyler PC., Laconia Community PC., St. Augustine PC., Throggs Neck PC., and First of Williams-Bridge PC. After much consideration on the total numbers of the congregation and membership of the churches, which is 1,721; only 0.123%, less than 1% of the Bronx population, and the locations of each church, one would anticipate a congregation of a higher number; especially when also relating the 1,721 to the Bronx population of 1,397,287 million in 2009; which was 1,203,789 in 1990.<sup>336</sup> The figure shows an increase of 193,498 in the Bronx population, which is 14% increase.<sup>337</sup>

However, there is no corresponding increase in the Bronx Presbyterian Church congregation. The smallness of the church population, compare to the seventeen churches

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<sup>336</sup> [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

may be the result of the absence of effective evangelism in most of the churches. The selection of the seven deacons helped widen the scope of Christianity, because through them, “the message of God kept on spreading, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem” (Acts 6:7). Although, evangelism is done in various ways; through church programs, yet the congregation is declining and in order to increase the size of the church population, the need of the people in the community need to be addressed, especially that of the young adults’, which falls within the ages of 0-19 of the 446,050 and 32.3% of the Bronx population. Prioritizing the quest of the young adults, who are always eager; full of enthusiasm and excitement about doing something may also engage and involve them in the affairs of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches, which may as well, encouraged them into staying in the church. Young adults crave for relationship with their pastors; whether spiritual or physical.<sup>338</sup> However, if such relationship as desired could not be attained in church, tendency is that they would seek it outside the church.<sup>339</sup> Therefore, the Sound View PC (USA) needs to be cautious of its “calling” concerning the need of the young adults and its community and be more challenged to move beyond its present position in a way that will attract more young adults and influence the Bronx community at large.

Historically, the Bronx Presbyterian Churches carries an image that does not in actuality reflects the status of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The name Presbyterians sounds very huge; especially as it is related to John Calvin, one of the greatest founders in church history and Presbyterian Church also being one of the earliest churches in

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<sup>338</sup> Anna Groff, [www.themennonite.org](http://www.themennonite.org) (accessed on November 20, 2011).

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

church history. Most of the Presbyterian churches in the Bronx collectively, with exception of the Eastchester PC (USA), with a membership of 399 and the Riverdale PC (USA), with a membership of 206, do not meet the average membership number of 195.<sup>340</sup>

The services of the Sound View Presbyterian Church and liturgy could be modify. Although, the healthiness of the church is in doubt due to an overriding active membership population which average at 50 years and above, the young adults' population is hardly noticeable; due to their non-participation in services. The service program of the church is predominantly occupied by adults from over 50 years and even some 80 plus years and above. What does this indicate? It indicates a theological neglect of the young adults in services and the hindrance of the development of the young adults and future leaders of the church in line with the Presbyterian Church (USA) doctrine. Probably, a retirement age could be set aside for the elderly or better still allow the elderly to occasionally feature in services, while the young adults are motivated to use their spiritual gifts in services before they think that they were deprived of the use of their talents and move out of the church.

In terms of church services and worship, the church is not a Roman Catholic; it is a Reformed Church,<sup>341</sup> however, the services are gear towards a Roman Catholic setting, with exception of the images, symbols and some recitations that characterizes the Roman Catholic Church services. This aspect of the church liturgy is very important to

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<sup>340</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), "Comparative Statistics, Annual Editions 1999-2009," [gamc.pcusa.org/minister/research/help-demographic-report](http://gamc.pcusa.org/minister/research/help-demographic-report) (accessed on March 15, 2011).

<sup>341</sup> Lefferts A. Loetscher, 23.

pronounce to other churches that does not understand the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church and equate it to the Roman Catholic practice. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has a form of democratic system of government. The pastors are somehow handicap in implementing policies and programs, due to the church administration. The Presbyterian Church (USA) is a “Reformed” traditional church, which is governed by presbyters, which comprises “Elders and Ministers of the Word and Sacrament.”<sup>342</sup> The Session possesses the authority ascribed to it in the church Constitution,<sup>343</sup> and it is also the governing body of the Church. The Session approves the church program policies; and any program that does not receive the blessings of the Session is eliminated at birth.

The buildings housing most of the churches are colossal edifices, with beautiful architectural designs that could accommodate worshippers in their thousands. The inside of the buildings also have enticements; the altars, rooms, the auditorium and other facilities; however, some of them are very old and dilapidated. The depreciation and deteriorating conditions in some of the buildings, especially that of Beck Memorial Presbyterian Church (USA), which was founded in 1814 and the building “a somber stone sentinel (capped with a terra-cotta-clad tower)”<sup>344</sup> was constructed in 1903. The depreciation on the building is so visible to the eyes, so that it is very scary worshipping inside the building or holding any other functions there, as debris falls on worshippers and during performance. St. Augustine, founded in 1938, had 1000 members between

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<sup>342</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), *Book of Order 2007/2009: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), Part II* (Published by the Office of the General Assembly, Louisville, KY. 2007), G.4.0301.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., G.4.0302.

<sup>344</sup> Fran Willensky Leadon, et al. “Beck Memorial Presbyterian Church” (AIA Guide to New York City – Google Books), [www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com).

1940s and 1950s (mostly African American & Puerto Ricans).<sup>345</sup> The building was constructed in 1906 by the Woodstock Presbyterian Church, which later merged into the “Home Street Presbyterian in 1938.”<sup>346</sup> The church now only has about 126 members. What happened to the 1000 membership? The St. Augustine’s building is also overdue for repairs. Although, the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) still maintained a nice building, the Sunday School Class of about 600 children, has barely ten children in the class; this is also the same with the adult Sunday school. The oldest of the Presbyterian Church in the Bronx; the First Presbyterian Church of Williams-Bridge, located on East 225<sup>th</sup> Street was founded in 1899, by some Northern Irish and Scotch, headed by Robert Wallace, who was then the “village clerk of Williams-bridge.”<sup>347</sup> The building which this church occupies; “a wooden frame structure with corner tower”<sup>348</sup> was erected in about 1908. The University Height Presbyterian Church (USA) on the West side of the Bronx, with Pastor Brenda Berry as the current leader was established on April 15, 1890.<sup>349</sup> It will also be very sincere to once again reflect on Rainer and Rainer’s findings concerning the churches in Western Europe. They described the churches as though “intricately and

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<sup>345</sup> “St. Augustine's Presbyterian Church 1930-1970," Bronx African American History ... [www.nycago.org/Organs/Brx/html/StAugustinePres.html](http://www.nycago.org/Organs/Brx/html/StAugustinePres.html) (accessed on March 15, 2011).

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> M. P. Moller Inc., “First Presbyterian Church of Williambridge” (Bronx), NY. [www.nycago.org/Organs/Brx/html/FirstPresWilliambridge.html](http://www.nycago.org/Organs/Brx/html/FirstPresWilliambridge.html) (accessed on March 15, 2011).

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

<sup>349</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), “Presbytery of New York City: Call Packet for the Stated Meeting, Presbytery of New York City, Saturday, September 25, 2010” on “Brief History of University Heights Presbyterian Church (UHPC),” Bronx NY., [www.nycpresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/2010-09.pdf](http://www.nycpresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/2010-09.pdf) (accessed on March 21, 2011).

monstrously beautiful,” they are empty of parishioners.<sup>350</sup> This has also been the case with most of the Bronx Presbyterian churches. A church that has no young people could be facing the problem of extinction.

This historical value of the churches is necessary, because it clearly indicates the standard which the churches have attained since their inception and there is also the probability that the causes of the reduction in the congregational sizes maybe the migration of parents from the community to other churches. However, the migration of the young adults is an unprecedented action that needed to be averted in order to control the eventual death of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches.

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<sup>350</sup> Sam S. Rainer III and Thom S. Rainer, 11.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE**

As Associate Minister of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), Sound View, Bronx, New York, I've notice the mass migration of young adults; 18-19 from the Bronx Presbyterian Church (USA); the attendance rate has dropped almost 70%. Ignoring this problem will lead to the death of the church. This demonstration project will create an educational process that will engage and encourage the young adults to become more involved in the life of the church.

#### **Catalyst of Young Adult Migration**

Visualizing or envisioning the meaning of “authentic leadership,” which means “real” leadership,<sup>351</sup> would be counter-productive if the chosen leaders cannot be provided the forum which would enable them demonstrate their leadership prowess. Joshua was encouraged in his quest for leadership position (Joshua 1:7). A young person's thought and ideas may not be mature, but some encouragement from leaders would empower them in fulfilling the desire goal of the leaders. Peter G. Northouse asserted that authentic leadership is still in the making.<sup>352</sup> Northouse in citing “Robert

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<sup>351</sup> Northhouse, Peter G., *Leadership: Theory and Practice, Fifth ed.* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2010), 205. Northhouse research reveals, that “Authentic leadership is about the authenticity of leaders and their leadership.”

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 205.



Terry's Authentic Leadership Approach"<sup>353</sup> indicated that leadership should be "action centered," which focuses on the "actions of the leader"<sup>354</sup> on a given situation and how leaders are supposed to do "what is right."<sup>355</sup> In this postmodern age, which is also termed the "jet age," everything is moving at a geometrical pace; that is the movement of people, instead of walking, it seem that everybody is leaping. I also see it as a period of rapid advancement in technology. People are just rushing to get to a destination; which is dictated by technology, which is taking the place of human being at work and other settings. The postmodern era has also induces great change in the lifestyle of young people. So many theories and scholarly definitions on postmodernism has sprang up; and one of such definition is that, postmodern is a style, that is

relating to art, architecture, literature or thinking developed after and usually in reaction to modernism, [while] postmodernism is the returning to more classical or traditional elements and technique.<sup>356</sup>

Drew Dyck notice a change in the way the young people speaks, which also indicates the "profound change in the way the young generation actually processes reality."<sup>357</sup> Reality to young people is found in technology; especially on cell phones and text messages, computerized equipments, which can respond to their questions and direct their messages within a twinkle of an eye. The absence of proper and genuine mentoring programs in the church could also be a possible reason for the young people's migration. Congregational

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>356</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999), s. v. "London."

<sup>357</sup> Drew Dyck, *Reality Remix* in *Generation Ex-Christian: Why Young Adults are Leaving the Faith... and How to Bring Them Back* (Illinois, Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 23.

leaders, like effective leaders need to mentor mentees through apprenticeship or link the young people to other leaders; this will create continuity in leadership when the apprentice grows to maturity. Stan Toler stated that Barnabas, even though he was “a great leader in the New Testament church” needed help and he went to look for Saul (Acts 11:25-26).<sup>358</sup> Leaders in the Bronx Presbyterian Churches can also find help in the youngsters when they are properly trained. Dyck called the change in the attitude of the youngsters “postmodernism.”<sup>359</sup> The young adults, as the leaders of tomorrow would actualize the vision of the church only when they can participate in the preliminary aspect of the organization which they belong. However, the lack of boldness, muteness or mumbling; not wanting to say anything, because their attitude may be tagged insubordination and disrespectful, and also the inability to feature without harsh criticism by adults due to their inexperience, causes the emotional migration of the young adults from the Bronx Presbyterian Churches. Oftentimes the young adults also feel alienated; because nobody cares for them and they seek comfort wherever they can find one.

### **Inducing Sensitivity of Young Adults on Leaders**

Apostle Paul’s epistle to Timothy; “Let no one look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in your speech, conduct, love, faithfulness, and purity” (1 Timothy 4:12, TNB), is part of Paul’s “instructions for godly living.” However, in some of the churches this passage of the scripture has not received the recognition and consciousness of the esteem which Paul placed on the youth. The aspect

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<sup>358</sup> Toler’s Stan, “Connect Weaker Member with Stronger Ones” in *Practical Guide for Pastoral Ministry: Real Help for Real Pastors* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2007), 230.

<sup>359</sup> Drew Dyck, 24.

of not despising the youth, which also mean acceptance of the youth is neglected, because the young adults are constantly treated with derision for not living godly lives. The expectation from them is to always give and not to receive, which also means that they have no choice, but to do as instructed. However, Kenda Creasy Dean recognized the attributes of God in young people; she wrote that,

In responding to Jesus' claim that choosing life first means losing it for his sake, youth possess a significant advantage: They have no hardened self to lose. The ideological openness of adolescents actually helps them identify with the suffering love of God.<sup>360</sup>

Although, there is a greater need for the spiritual development of the young people, some of the pastors are aware of the problems, so that they advocate for a period of sensitivity for the youngsters, in order to create awareness, which will in turn allow the youngsters to grow to maturity; allowing them to participate and be engaged in the church matters. In effect and in truth, according to Dean,

During adolescent, the created self has not yet become encased in adult identifications; adolescents' very incompleteness provides an opportunity for divine reconstruction.<sup>361</sup>

Based on Dean's statement, young adults are still in the adulthood making process, but are not yet involved in the abnormalities of adulthood; as they are still humble. This to Dean is an open "opportunity for divine reconstruction;" which in effect indicates an opportunity to remold them into whatever structure that will benefit the church.

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<sup>360</sup>Kenda Creasy Dean, "The Adolescent Advantage," in *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 64. Dean is "the associate professor of youth, church, and culture and director of the Tennent School of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary." In this section of her book she talked about "self" that reflect the image of God.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

Pastor Brenda Berry of the University Height PC (USA) could not hold back her feelings on how she felt listening to some of the young adults complain and the problems evolving the migration of young people from the Bronx Presbyterian churches. There is no opportunity to fellowship with their peers, friends and companions; they cannot attend church services with their boyfriend or girlfriends, without negativism from the adults. These complains, if put into perspective, evolved a theological question; what image of the young adults is the primary concern of the pastors and the congregations? Putting in mind that part of the pastor's calling is to "develop vision, mission, and values within the congregation."<sup>362</sup> However gifted the pastor is the dynamism of the vision making, vision statement and value clarification is "the rebirth of image and imagination within the congregation,"<sup>363</sup> which also includes the young adults. Image in this regard; "serves as a mode for perceiving a given reality, especially where this reality is of such a nature as not to be amenable to objective visibility or measurement."<sup>364</sup>

### **Enticing Young Adult with Church Programs**

No matter the weight or value of the pastor's intention in creativity of the vision and the actualization of the vision through the mission statement and the congregation, the "communal task"<sup>365</sup> of the church if it would be extended beyond the church into the community and beyond must be well articulated, not only by words, also by attractive

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<sup>362</sup> Victor L. Hunter, *Creativity: Image and Imagination in Desert Hearts and Healing Fountains: Gaining Pastoral Vocational Clarity* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2003), 47.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid., 48

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

programs that would entice the youngsters and even lure them into staying in the church, even when their parents are migrating. The “reality” in this regard would be a focus on the plight of the young adults’ migration and how not to authenticate it, but to inevitably avert it. On the other hand the “imagination” of both the pastor and the congregation concerning the young adults would also be to initiate a process or a forum that will enable the teenagers the opportunity to voice out, that which they have been mumbling and for the pastors and the congregation to attentively listen, because “nobody cares for them” has been one of the major complains of the youngsters. Pastor Cleotha Robertson of the Sound View PC, Pastor Lonnie Bryant of Featherbed Lane PC and Pastor Brenda Berry of University Height PC care for the immigration of the youth in the Bronx Presbyterian Churches. The pastors annotated their concerns and their effort towards alleviating the problems. Pastor Brenda sum up the causes of the young adults migration in three words; “networking, socializing and mismatch.”<sup>366</sup> Pastor Brenda in explaining what she meant by this word, she said by “networking,” the youth find it difficult to communicate with one another and work together as a unit in the church. The problem of “socializing,” is not a thing to write home about. To Pastor Brenda, there is no case of fellowshiping together or having social activity or to take part in social activity or behave in a friendly way to other among the youth in the church. Finally, the issue of “mismatch” also did not support Pastor Brenda idea of leadership. It is with hesitation that the Pastor comments on this point. There is the notion among the congregations that the young adult are

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<sup>366</sup> Branda Berry, “The Young Adult Immigration from Bronx Presbyterian Churches,” interview by Sunday Etsekhume on February 26, 2011. Pastor Branda Berry is the pastor of the University Height Presbyterian Church, at 2167 University Avenue 181<sup>st</sup>, Bronx, NY. Pastor Branda and I had the conversation at the “Leadership Development Day” conference on February 26, 2011, organized by Presbytery of New York City, held at the Brick Presbyterian Church (USA), New York, NY.

incompatible with to each other; therefore, parents does not see them as unsuited for their children. Kadeem Marulaz, the president of the youth ministry at the Sound View Presbyterian Church, just turn 21 has been preaching to the youth in the Bronx PC at the age of 18. Although, Kadeem leads the youth team, he still find problems in the church mentoring program, which honestly has not be created at the Sound View church. Courtney Darden of the Sound View PC, who is now 18 years, has been the head of the dancing team in the church, even before she turned 18 years and Charisma, not even 18 years yet and Naheema Green, who has just attained 18 years, were elected to serve in the church Deacons Board. Elizabeth Adu-Boahen, not even 16 year old was allowed to be worship leader and the youth were given one Sunday during the service to conduct the service. Such is the encouragement that Pastor Robertson has been giving to the young adults.

On March 27, 2011, Pastor Lonnie Bryant, at their church “Youth Service,” where Kadeem Marulaz preached, said to me that “immediately after the service they are taking the young people to see the Circus.” I thought this was another way to encourage the young adults. Although, I was not impressed by their turn out; only 10 of them were in the choir; the oldest one was above 18 years, 2 of them were between 16 and 17 years and the others were below 14 years old, including two that were between 7 and 9 years. My curiosity was confirmed about other teenagers in the church, as I was told, “that is all they have.” The second paragraph of the Featherbed Lane PC, which states as follows: “... As Disciples of Christ, we have been commissioned to reach out to those who need

healing and new hope,”<sup>367</sup> if adhere to could also foster mutual relationships between the congregation, the youth and the community. Parental and guidance intervention also could aid in the process of alleviating the youngsters problems; if they could penetrate the heart of the young men and women. The heart is the center of all activities and could also be the cavity of decay if not well tended. “[Our] body exists because of the heart.”<sup>368</sup> The heart getting decay will mean the nursing and emission of evil deeds which is also associated with the thoughts of idle minds. Part of which may be association with gangs and community violence. The article on “Teen Gang Involvement,”<sup>369</sup> indicated reasons some teens are involve in violence. The article stated “involvement with gang”<sup>370</sup> as one possible reason for teens violence. However, anxiety about the New York State law on age emancipation, which renounces parental rights to a child,<sup>371</sup> gives the right of emancipation to minors. This is also a getaway point for the youngsters’ decision making; even on church attendance, as they hide under the canopy of such laws as excuse for their deviance.

### **Hypocrisy and Resistance to Change**

Part of the cause of the youngsters migration could be envisioned in Paul’s statement to “the holy and faithful brothers in Christ” at the Colossians church

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<sup>367</sup> The Featherbed Lane Presbyterian Church, “Mission Statement” (141 Featherbed Lane, Bronx, NY.) The mission statement as indicated in the church bulletin, on the occasion of their “Youth Service” on March 27, 2011.

<sup>368</sup> “Article of the Heart,” [www.heart.com](http://www.heart.com) (accessed on November 19, 2011).

<sup>369</sup> “Teen Gang Involvement,” TeenHelp.com (November 19, 2011).

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> The USLegal, Inc., “New York Emancipation of Minor Law,” [www.minors.uslegal.com](http://www.minors.uslegal.com) (accessed on November 19, 2011).

(Colossians 2:18-19). Paul warned against false teaching and “false humility.”<sup>372</sup> It is logical that Paul to advised the Colossians since they have receive Christ in whom there resides all of this fullness, it should be right to live in Christ. The problem of the false teaching in church has been anticipated as leadership problem. My experience with a young man, who was about the age of 16-17, who doesn’t believe in the existence of God, is indicative of some of the thoughts and questions in the mind of our young people. The young man said to me, “I don’t like church and I don’t believe in God.” Then I asked him why. He said to me that he only came to the church that Sunday, because his mother invited him to his sister’s confirmation. After engaging the young man in a discussion, I found out that he was already in conformity with the Atheist, on the question of God’s existence. How did this young man’s issue come to play in this analysis? The young man’s assertion is that if God really exists why would the preachers say one thing and do something else and that it is because the preacher himself doesn’t believe in the existence of God. Many youngsters have either migrated or left the church of their birth due to false teaching and hypocrisy and with the same assertion as that of the youngster I encountered. Dyck, who was also narrating his experience with his friend, Abe, further asked, “How could the guy I’d watched lost in worship turn cold toward God?”<sup>373</sup> Although, Dyck’s friend deserted the church, Dyck still puzzles on his reason for leaving. Dyck’s conclusion is that “no study or survey can fully probe the heart of a person, much less the mind of God. So when it comes to assessing how many people are joining or

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<sup>372</sup> Howard I. Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downer Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 371.

<sup>373</sup> Drew Dyck, 16.



leaving the faith, we're dealing with educated guesses.”<sup>374</sup> Part of the inability “to probe the heart of a person, much less the mind of God,” is the “resistance to change.”<sup>375</sup> Transformation could occur as a result of “spiritual and relational vitality,”<sup>376</sup> however, orthodoxy obstruct change. To some believers of orthodoxy, the status quo must be maintained and preserved. Therefore, the inability to be listened to by the leaders due to leaders resistance to change and the inability of the young adults to introduce their new found love in technology, is also a driving force militating against the utilization of the young people’s ideas, which makes them look for another place that will need and make use of their gifts.

“Justice delayed is justice denied” the popular quote of William Gladstone, a British politician (1809-1898).<sup>377</sup> Delays in policy implementations hinder and obstruct continuity. This also influences migration of young adults from the Bronx PCs. The “Session” which is the governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA) possesses the authority ascribed to it by the church Constitution; the Book of Order.<sup>378</sup> The Session has a form of democratic system of government, which also means that unless a quorum is formed decisions cannot be made. This body does not convene on regular basis and when it does sometimes a quorum is not formed, which delays the decision making process.

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<sup>374</sup> Dyck, Drew, 16-17.

<sup>375</sup> Mike Bonem, James H. Furr and Jim Herrington, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 16.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> William Ewart Gladstone, “William Gladstone: Author Details and Biography – The Quotation Page,” [www.quotationspage.com](http://www.quotationspage.com). Gladstone was the British Prime Minister 1868-1874, 1880-1885, and 1886, 1892-1894.

<sup>378</sup> The Presbyterian Church (USA), “Session,” *The Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) 2007-2009*, G.4.0302.

Sometimes, when the quorum is formed, decisions are also not made, because of disagreement on issues, which induces the postponement of important matters affecting the church. My experience, as member of the Session in my church counts. I have witness such delay in policies formulation. Although, the young adults crave for opportunities that will enable them serve in the church, but hindrance by the delay in policy making causes migration of the young people.

The project thus addresses the problem of relationally alienated young adults who have yet to experience a loving intimacy with Jesus Christ or membership in a healthy church family, but are doing all at their disposal to be membership of a faith family. The perceptive to the understanding of the relationship of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) and the young adults in the church, will not compare to Jesus teaching at the temple at the age of 12 (Luke 2:42). This argument is that if young adults are alienated from the church, theologically and spiritually the church will not fulfill the calling on the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). Besides, the Bible recorded that “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40, KJV). The description of Jesus by Luke is an indication that the child grew in both physical and spirit wisdom. Darrell L. Bock wrote, that “Jesus grew in his perception of God’s will.”<sup>379</sup> Luke’s emphasis did not only describe Jesus as “humanity,” but his description also place Jesus as embodiment of God wisdom. More so, Jesus is filled with wisdom of God and a character that demonstrated the fear of God.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50: Baker Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1994), 254.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

From the child, Jesus listening to the doctors and asking them question (Luke 2:46), which made Luke anticipated that the child at the age of 12 year old must be full of knowledge and wisdom. The proceeding action confirmed the demonstration of knowledge and wisdom, which Luke wrote about; “And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answer” (Luke 2:27, KJV). The Jesus story is imperative to the Sound View PC (USA) young adults’ scenario, which has limited time for young adults’ participation in church services. Common sense will tell those teenager that are not yet serious to having a relationship with Jesus Christ as oppose to those that have made up their mind to have relationship with Christ. Sunday school evidence shows that the young adults who wish to have a relationship with Jesus Christ demonstrate their ability to learn. This type of imagery can be attributed to knowledge of seeking knowledge, which will later develop into wisdom of God (James 1:5). Evidence from the Sunday school show, that if the young adults who are willing to learn are train to the understanding of the knowledge of God, they will be also Sunday School Teacher, Evangelist, Prophet and Pastor. Although, extremely difficult for the upward movement, but it is a reality. Stan Toler’s wrote, “Just as the competitor cannot win without physical discipline, neither can we succeed as pastor without spiritual discipline.”<sup>381</sup> Toler’s wrote the topic “Creating a Dynamic Devotional Life.”<sup>382</sup> The writer compared sport; athletes training to consistencies in pastoral practices. In summary, the disciplined athletes will train or practice until they are able to face and win a contest. Something goes to a pastor

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<sup>381</sup> Stan Toler’s, *Practical Guide for Pastoral Ministry: Real Help for Real Pastor* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2007), 33.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

who want to be successful will devote more time in prayer and fasting. Young adults of the Sound View PC (USA) must convey the message of praying without ceasing to one another and to devote more time to praying and praying, in order for them to be successful in their devotion and vocation.

Conclusively, I likened the young adults in the Bronx Presbyterian Churches as seeds planted on a land, while the land is the church. According to an article, titled, “Seed of Change in Urban Gardens: Sowing Millions Project Gives Gardeners a Head Start,”<sup>383</sup> Donte Taylor, a participants, said, “The gardens are waking up, and we’re giving the ground something to be happy about.”<sup>384</sup> The Bronx Presbyterian Churches will “wake up” again, if the youngsters, who are the seeds of the church, that were disconnected from the life of the church, will be well tended and allow to grow and bring happiness which is departing the church back to the church. There is an urgent need for the metamorphosis which will bring about rebirth in the Bronx Presbyterian Churches.

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<sup>383</sup> Tara MacISAAC, “Seed of Change in Urban Gardens: Sowing Millions Project gives gardeners a head start,” in “The Epoch Times,” Thursday, March 31, 2011, cover page. The participants were students are from the Middle School 328 in Rodale Pleasant Park in East Harlem in New York City.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Goal and Strategies**

**Goal 1:** Awareness Raising: raise the awareness of Bronx Presbyterian Churches, because lack of youth in the church will lead to death of the churches. This will help raise the consciousness of church members to the problems of youth migration from the church, which will enable me to measure a benchmark success in achieving<sup>385</sup> goals of preventing the youngsters from further migration.<sup>386</sup>

**Strategy 1:** Visitation to other churches. Between April 1, 2012 and April 29, 2012, I with Elder Mayphil Whyte and a member of Sound View Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry shall visit two non-Presbyterian Churches in the Bronx; The Church of Revelation and the United Church of Jesus Christ, while we shall also visit the Brick Presbyterian Church (USA) in New York, New York. This will give us the opportunity to see the different youth programs these churches has and the young adults' participation and performance in their various church programs; for example, their involvement in leadership, mid-week programs.

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<sup>385</sup> Site Team, "Creating Awareness," member of my Site Team in the proposal of my Demonstration Project for the Doctor of Ministry Program (New York Theological Seminary Mentor and Research Development, on May 26, 2011).

<sup>386</sup> Christine Barney, *Developing Public Relations Campaigns: Top PR Experts on Implementing a PR Plan Benchmarking Success, and Achieving Client Goals* (Massachusetts, Boston: Aspatore Books, 2007), preface.

**Strategy 2:** In-Church Public Relations (PR). This Public Relations campaign will help manipulate and lobby church leaders to shape all messages delivered by the young adults' from an organizational<sup>387</sup> point of view or otherwise, conveying the ideas of the demonstration project and drawing attention towards the problems of the migration of the youngsters to the congregations. The purpose of the PR is also to give voice to the church leadership and to maximize the effect of the project, which may be echoed throughout every aspect of the church and for the churches to enjoy its impact. One way to do this is to "get intimately familiar to everyone,"<sup>388</sup> including the church and leaders, because the people have the greatest knowledge of the organization and also have the greatest abilities to effect change or transformation. Elder Mayphil Whyte, Kadeem Marulaz, the President of the Youth Ministry and I will be involved in this exercise. This exercised is ongoing process.

**Strategy 3:** Conduct conference. Invite young adults, between ages 18 and 19, from the Bronx Presbyterian Churches to a conference, which may take about one hours and with the aim of knowing and addressing their needs. Human needs are "central element in everyday psychology."<sup>389</sup> Needs are very important, because everyone has them. However, identifying individual needs may be "elusive."<sup>390</sup> The area of needs may be in

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<sup>387</sup> Christine Barney, Preface.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

<sup>389</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Deal, Terrence E., *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, choice, and Leadership*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Imprint, 2008), 122.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

the concentration of the “basic qualities,”<sup>391</sup> which strong and healthy congregations should share. These basic qualities are “grace, strengths, compassion, excellent sprinters, and act swiftly,” which may also be the latent strength of the organization.<sup>392</sup> To determine the causes of the young adults’ migration from the churches, meet their needs, and to classify them into the appropriate categories, by making use of the right talent for the right course an atmosphere will be created that will allow them to express themselves without fear or intimidation and that will enable one to understand their needs. Pastor Francis Inofomoh will conduct Conference on May 5, 2012.

**Strategy 4: Seminars and Sermons.** Rev. Sonja West will conduct one seminar on May 19 and I will deliver one sermons on May 27, 2012 that will focus on the importance of young adults in the church and how to engage and involve them in the church activities and programs. The lectures will be focused primarily on “constructive motivations” and the church motivational tracts; who is involved, why they are involved, how they are involved and what are the peculiar characteristics found in them.

**Evaluation of Goal 1:** Complete assessment of the plans and success of goal 1 and the strategies explored, a clear observation and detailed account of each of the strategies will be recorded, reflecting participants’ and positive and negative responses of the participants. Compilation of accurate data will also enable me track the success of the project.<sup>393</sup> This data will be gathered from the various age brackets within the PCS and

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<sup>391</sup> Kennon L. Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church: Strong, Healthy Congregations Living in the Grace of God*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 5.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> Howard M. Guttman, *Coach Yourself to Win: Seven Steps to Breakthrough Performance on the Job and in Your Life* (San Francisco, California: McGraw Hill, 2011), 124.

the 18-19 ages group within the PC vis-à-vis other non-PC.<sup>394</sup> Another important point of evaluation that can add weight to the project is to ensure that all the participants are within the same age range;<sup>395</sup> 18-19 years old, which indication will be that the responses are directly from the age group in question. However, 75% of the participants will complete pre and post questionnaire to indicate the success of their responses.

**Goal 2:** Building a Team. Teamwork is a “cooperative work by a group.”<sup>396</sup> The goal is to prevention further migration of young adults in the Bronx Presbyterian Churches.

**Strategy 1:** Involving the Site Team and some of Elders, Deacons and some member of the Youth Ministry in a small group. This strategy is to ensure that the Elders, Deacons and the members of the Youth will work with me to have a part in developing the share vision and common goal of the Demonstration Project. This strategy will also accommodate each individual idea and incorporates them to all participant expectation for the project. The aspect of building a team or “group intervention” is called the “human relations laboratories.”<sup>397</sup> This also means that all participants share a common goal for the interest of the projects.

**Strategy 2:** Define Member Role and Responsibility. This will enable the member demonstrate their collaboration and carefully planned how they can contribute meaningfully to the success of the project. In defining the role and responsibility, member will be informed of the duration of the project.

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<sup>394</sup> Floyd J. Fowler, “Introduction” in *Survey Research Method (Applied Social Research Methods, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Thousand Oak, California: Sage Publication, Inc., 2008), 3-6.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999), s. v. “London.”

<sup>397</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, 162.



**Strategy 3:** Involve All Members in Project Activity. Members will be notified of any deliberate concerning the project. Meeting will also be schedule at the members convenient, so that all communication and decision will be made through consensus.

**Strategy 4:** Acknowledgment and Reward for all Members. All team members' individual efforts contributing towards the project will be rewarded. The member will be encouraged to share their individual idea to the benefit of the project.

**Evaluation for Goal 2:** Efforts of the Site Team members and the Team work will be evaluated at least by 75% of the Site Team members during the duration of the Demonstration Project. Response will be received from the team performance from about four members of the site team.

**Goal 3:** The Team Create the Educational Process. Before beginning to deal with the issue of change in our church system, the site team will develop a proposal that will engage the young adults' and prevent further migration.<sup>398</sup> The team will examine the current operating system in the church and build an effective model which truly integrates the church educational, school and the home educational system.

**Strategy 1:** The Team will anticipate increase participation of the Christian Education Committee members, the Youth Ministry and other areas of the church and into the community. Data Compilation/Computation: Preliminary and pertinent findings will include the advancement made during the research process and data compilation, gathered during the research to support the proposal. "Performance data" would be a

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid. "integrating Frames for Effective Practice," in "Across Frames: Organizations as multiple Realities," and in "Four Interpretations of Organizational Process," under "Goal Setting," Bolman and Deal gave the process that will "keep organizations headed in the right direction," and also write about one of such proposal under the "Human Resources Frame," to keep people involved and communication open," 307.

valuable planning and control system, because it “measures and motivates, particularly when targets are reasonably clear and measurable.”<sup>399</sup> This is so importance, because the Christian Education Committee and the Youth Ministry are the core target of the basis of the project.

**Strategy 2:** Research Design and Methods. The Team will also encourage the Christian Education Committee and the Youth Ministry to reach out to visitor and to find ways to involve them immediately in the church program through social networking, fun and fellowship and to also engage them in volunteer opportunities. The Team will also collaborate with the young adults in the churches to inquire the best ways to involve and engage them in the church services and programs and with the pastors, leaders and the congregations to inquire the best ways to involve and engage the young adults’ in the church services and programs and communicate strategies that will support the workability of the proposal.

**Strategy 3:** The Team will Propose Action Plan. Research, survey, and propose a series of programs and projects that will encourage the young adults’ full participation in their churches and also innovations that may convince church leaders of the benefits of the project. For instance; the young adults’ should be fully involve in the choir on a regularly basis as opposed to once in a month or special occasions, young adults will participate in Sunday school, Bible studies and other related educational program, and the young adults should have a play space both indoor and outdoor.

**Strategy 4:** The Team will Identify and propose pilot program. This program will serve as a prototype of what is been articulated in the demonstration project and will include a

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<sup>399</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, 52.

component by which to enable participating churches to evaluate the success of the project. The church will be encourage to create activities to reach out to the Soundview community through welcoming activities that are open to friends of members and potential visitors. Teachers will be encouraged among the congregation to volunteer to teach in the different classes that constitute the educational program. This will be done by encouraging the pastors and church leaders to involve the young adults in all the church programs and on regular basis, rather than on a monthly basis or only on a special occasion.

**Evaluation for Goal 3:** The evaluation will be done by critically looking at the team participation, by the feedback from the pastor, Christian Educational Committee member, the Youth Ministry and other church leaders and the congregation. To be sure that the objective of the project is realized, majority of the participants must indicate their approval; by at least 75% approval rate.

**Goal 4:** Implementation of the Process. The strategic planning of the propose project, if concrete steps are not taken to execute the plan, it will be of little use. It is in the implementation that we begin to see the long-term, systematic impact of change.

**Strategy 1:** Research and Survey. The first aspect of this strategy is to know by numbers the remnant of the young adults in this sample group in the churches; their level of participation and the reason they have chosen to stay in the church. Quantitative research, use of questionnaires, personal interviews, graphs and charts will be used to gather information; as this “Quantitative research can also be used to measure attitude, satisfaction, commitment and a range of other useful [parameters] that can track over

time and used as part of a wider business planning and business strategy process.”<sup>400</sup> A survey of randomly selected churches, their pastors/leaders and young adults will be conducted. I will also explore the service of the young adults’ and youth leaders in my church as well as some of the other churches that will be engaged in the process of the research, conferences, interview and data compilation. Comparison will also be done between the Sound View Presbyterian Church, some of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches and some non-Presbyterian Churches to get an idea of what is luring the young adults’ away as a way of examining and evaluating the measures that are luring the young adults’ away from the Bronx Presbyterian Churches and to non-Presbyterian churches.

**Strategy 2:** *Genogram*<sup>401</sup> of the churches. *Genogram* is a systemic approach that will be used to examine the history and explore “how the congregations have functioned since [their] inception.”<sup>402</sup> It is also a way of looking at the historical background of the churches; the relationship between the pastors and his or her workers/leaders; the congregations and members, especially their communication style or models and leader’s accountability; and any other systems of accountability. The idea is to see if there has been a change in the pastors’ relationship with their leaders and the young adults and if this change has been responsible for the young adults’ migration.<sup>403</sup>

**Strategy 3:** Library Research. Books, articles, periodicals, computer research and other related materials will also be a source of this research projects. This will also aid me in

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<sup>400</sup> “Market Research for Decision Maker,” “Quantitative Research,” [www.dobney.com](http://www.dobney.com) (accessed on November 20, 2011).

<sup>401</sup> Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A System Approach* (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, Inc., 2006), 38.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> Site Team.

analyzing the various discoveries that will be made and support the recommendations that will subsequently follow.

**Strategy 4:** Show Movies. These criteria will motivate and allow the young adults to fully participate in the project; having acquired knowledge about the dangers posed to the churches of migration after seeing the movies. These Christian movies will allow the young adults to see the importance of them staying in the church as opposed to them not staying in the church.

**Evaluation for Goal 4:** The knowledge, by examination of the roles played by the pastors, leaders and the congregations<sup>404</sup> on the migration of the young adults' will also be educative in the evaluation. Drew Dyck, writing not to discard the reasons for young adults leaving the faith, stated that;

Some have overstated the case against the church, pinning the full responsibility of the trend on Christian hypocrisy and flawed ministry approaches. While I'm wary of such categorical condemnations, this one contains at least a kernel of truth. And where we've been part of the problem, we must acknowledge our complicity.<sup>405</sup>

The church has to be cautious of its role in the migration of the young adults. In order to devise a better recommendation that could assist the churches in utilizing the skills of the young adults', which as well will prevent further migration. The church leadership knowledge or awareness on the issue of young adults will be examined. Obviously, due to other responsibilities, some leaders may be ignorant of the movement of the young adults in their congregations. However, the response of leaders to conditions makes a leader, not the condition itself. Church leaders must at all times include young adults in

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<sup>404</sup> Drew Dyck, "Give them a Cause!" 148.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

their agendas. In “Agenda Settings,” Bolman and Deal, stated that “the first step in effective political leadership is setting an agenda.”<sup>406</sup> The questions that may buttress this point further are, Are the church leaders interested in the participation of the young adults’ or their own selfish interest at the expense of the young adults? How are they managing the young adults in their respective churches? Prioritizing the migration of young adults from the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), will be to include the issue of the young adults in their Sessions agendas, because “effective leader creates an agenda for change with two major elements: a vision balancing the long-term interests of the key parties and a strategy for achieving the vision, recognizing competing internal and external forces.”<sup>407</sup> While the agenda is aimed at “change” or transformation, the concern for the young adults as a “major stakeholder”<sup>408</sup> in the church, must be address to also impart the young adults themselves.

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<sup>406</sup> Bolman Lee G., and Deal Terrence E., “Political Skills,” 205.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **Research Question One: Historical**

What do the Pastors, leaders and congregation of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA) perceived to be the central factors surrounding the migration of young adults' from the church.<sup>409</sup> Would it be possible to control and prevent such migration in anticipation of the future participation of the youngsters as future leaders of the church in terms of the development of the young adults towards leadership, by creating an atmosphere that will obstruct the rapidity of the migration flow?

At certain time in the life of the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), the young adult Sunday school was said to be over 400 children, but now the young adults' are barely noticeable at services.

#### **Research Questions Two: Social/Economical/Political**

How does the Bronx geographical location, occupational distribution and racial diversity enhanced the problem of the young adults' migration from the Sound View Presbyterian

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<sup>409</sup> Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III, "From Nonessential to Essential Church," in *Essential Church: Reclaiming a Generation of Dropout*. The research question is based on the question asked by the writers, Rainer and Rainer III, "Why do more than two-third of churchgoing young adult American leave the church? Or to ask the question positively, why do one-third of churchgoing young adult American stay in the church?" 6.

Church (USA).<sup>410</sup> What role does parental migration from the Bronx to suburbs, other States and Counties in search of occupations play in the migration of the young adults?

Statistics Data indicates that though, the Bronx population is over three million, the Bronx Presbyterian Churches membership does not have a corresponding increase.

### **Research Questions Three: Biblical/Spiritual/Theological**

What are the biblical, spiritual and theological implications of the migration of young adults' from the Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA)?

The Bible teaches that children be trained in “the ways of God and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverb 22:6). The Bible, especially the book of wisdom, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and The Songs of Songs teach wisdom and discipline (Proverb 1:2-7). Jesus loves children. He encouraged children to come to him (Mark 10:13-16).

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<sup>410</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations, Artistry, Choice, and Leadership 4<sup>th</sup>*, in the “Structural Frame,” the “Human Resource Frame,” the “Political Frame” and “Symbolic Frame,” Bolman and Deal writes about the strategies on Reframing Change in the Organization, 43-67, 119-163, 229-245, 251-277.



## **CHAPTER 5 EVALUATION PROCESS**

The evaluation of my Demonstration Project will focus on the challenge statement and the title, which is the primary concern of the migration of the young adults' from the Sound View Presbyterian Church, and will be determined through four strategic methods, which are also part of the plan of implementation.

### **Method of evaluation 1: Visitation to other Non- Presbyterian Churches**

My Site Team and I will visit other non-PC churches in different locations, explore their services and talk to some of their leaders from the questionnaires we collectively prepare; in order to acknowledge and acquire knowledge on their youth programs and the extent of their involvement or performance in their leadership and mid-week programs.

### **Method of evaluation 2: Conduct Young Adults' Conferences**

Invitation will be sent out to the some of the Bronx Presbyterian Churches young adults; between ages 18 and 19, to a conference, which may take 2 or 3 hours and with the aim of knowing and addressing their needs; regarding their participation in their church activities and programs. Human needs are “central element in everyday psychology.”<sup>411</sup> Needs are very important, because everyone has them. However,

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<sup>411</sup> Lee G. Bolman, Terrence E. Deal, 122.

identifying individual needs may be “elusive.”<sup>412</sup> The area of needs may be in the concentration of the “basic qualities,”<sup>413</sup> which strong and healthy congregations should share. These basic qualities are “grace, strengths, compassion, excellent sprinters, and act swiftly;” which may also be the latent strength of the organization.<sup>414</sup> To determine the causes of the young adults’ migration from the churches, meet their needs, and to classify them into the appropriate categories, by making use of the right talent for the right course an atmosphere will be created that will allow them to express themselves in feedbacks without fear or intimidation and that will enable one to understand their needs and appropriately recommend to their churches where and how to engage their services.

### **Method evaluation III: Surveys and Statistical Analysis**

This method will enable my Site Team and I to know by numbers the remnant of the young adults in this sample group in the Bronx PCs; their level of participation and the reason they have chosen to stay in the church. Quantitative research, use of questionnaires, personal interviews, graphs and charts will be used to gather information; as this “Quantitative research can also be used to measure attitude, satisfaction, commitment and a range of other useful [parameters] that can track over time and used as part of a wider business planning and business strategy process.”<sup>415</sup> A survey of randomly selected churches, their pastors/leaders and young adults will be conducted. I will also explore the service of the young adults’ and youth leaders in my church as well as some

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<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

<sup>413</sup> Kennon L. Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church: Strong, Healthy Congregations Living in the Grace of God*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco, California: Published by Jossey-Bass, 2010), 5.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.

<sup>415</sup> *Quantitative Research*, [www.dobney.com](http://www.dobney.com) (accessed on November 19, 2011).

of the other churches that will be engaged in the process of the research, conferences, interview and data compilation. Comparison will also be made between the Bronx Presbyterian Churches and non-Presbyterian Churches to get an idea of what is luring the Bronx PCs young adults' away as a way of examining and evaluating the measures that are luring the Bronx PCs young adults' away to non-Presbyterian churches.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES**

#### **The process**

My understanding of the “Ministerial Competencies,” is that base on my site team assessment, I have to focus and identify areas of my abilities and capabilities, refine them, in order to use the best assessments and strategies that will increase the intensity, excellence and completeness of my demonstration projects. The assessment of my “ministerial competencies” was done by my Site Team base on their observation of my ministerial and academic performances, and also their personal relationship with me. The team deliberated via text messages, emails and telephone. Although, individually, they presented their evaluations, collectively, they agreed on the top most priorities.

The “ministerial competencies” commenced on February 19, 2011 at the Site Team Orientation, which took place at The Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY - Sockman Lounge and continued thereafter.

On April 30, I sent text and email to my Site Team; notifying them of the need for them to continue on my ministerial competencies. Rev. Dr. Cleotha Robertson (Ph.D.), the Pastor Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA), Bronx, and Professor of Old Testament at the Nyack College Alliance Theological Seminary was at the orientation via the conference line. Rev. Sonja Anita West, a graduate of Nyack College Alliance Theological Seminary, and an editor with HarpCollins Publishers, who is also experience in Site Team work, because of her involvement in her pastor’s New York Theological

Seminary demonstration project was also present at the February 19 orientation. Rev. Francis Inofomoh work with the Department of Homeless, also a graduate of the Nyack College Alliance Theological Seminary, was also present at the orientation. Elder Mayphil Whyte is the Chairperson of the Youth Ministry in the Sound View PC. She is also one of the youth coordinators at the Bronx PC and also a student of Nyack College Alliance Theological Seminary. Late Elder Stephen Ogunlowo, a graduate at Nyack College Alliance Theological Seminary, a staunch supporter of the project, was also present at the orientation, unfortunately Brother Ogunlowo passed on April 1, 2011. However, his assessment on February 19, 2011 could not be left out. Deacon Blessing Etsekhume, a graduate of Mercy College, with B.A. in Behavioral Science was also involved in my assessment process.

### **The Assessments**

**Spiritual Leadership:** As a spiritual leader, Rev. Sunday has expressed a great burden and passion for “going back to the basics” of spiritual leadership. Rev. Sonja West wrote; some years ago, Sunday shared with me a proposal for a book he was writing, *Moving Jesus Beyond the Pulpit*, a book designed to help spiritual leaders move beyond preaching as the exclusive means for conveying the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and doing so with integrity. Sunday realizes that leadership is not merely a responsibility or privilege, but a call that informs every area of his life, and he has attempted to model that in his relationships with family members, friends, and colleagues.

**Intercessor:** As an intercessor: Rev. Sunday has shown himself to be a faithful intercessor, consistently and steadfastly lifting up the needs of others in the congregation, often in the midst of his own personal and physical struggles.

**Theologian:** Rev. Sunday Etsekhume is a graduate of the Nyack College Alliance Theological Seminary. His strong understanding of the Bible is reflective in his interpretation of the text, which also shape his contextual theological reflections on contemporary issues. His lifestyle as a theologian portrays his theological perspective on human existence, attributes and cultural influences. He envisions the engagement of all categories of people in the work of the ministry and also advocates multiculturalism, which is also reflected in his teachings; that Christians should embrace all culture and people. Rev. Sunday is prompt to respond to calls and requests for information.

**Mentor:** Rev. Sunday not only presents himself as a mentor to others but also surrounds himself with able men and women of God with vast experience and vibrant ministries. This supports his desire to learn and be taught. He is able to learn from them and subject himself to corrections and criticisms. Rev. Etsekhume can also fit in as a good Counselor, because he is a good listener and always encourages people on biblical issue.

**Administrator:** As a leader Rev. Sunday is constantly exhibiting good qualities that have taken his ministry to greater heights. Some of these qualities include organizing members for optimum results, encouraging and assisting members where necessary in order to bring out their best. He gets involve at every stage of an issue and sees to its completion/resolution. He delegates responsibilities appropriately where necessary. His sense of judgment on issues is very sharp leading to quick resolution. Rev. Etsekhume work and communicate effectively with members of the Sound View PC and his attitude encourages teamwork and boost morale.

**Preacher:** Rev. Sunday Etsekhume biblical perspective reflects in the ways he preaches. His biblical interpretation is value as an asset of a quality of a good preacher. His

sermons are mostly centered on spiritual growth. Rev. Etsekhume is very bold in delivering the Word; he is biblically, economically and politically coherent. He preaches on contemporary issues as it affects us today and relates it to the biblical principles. As a preacher, Rev. Sunday relies absolutely on the Holy Spirit. He takes his time to prepare his sermons by extensive research and Bible reading. He also rely on a wide range of commentaries and other materials which enables him present the “good news” of Jesus Christ to the congregation in the most exemplary way. The congregation is always moved by his messages mostly due to his extensive preparations. He is also able to preach on a wide variety of topics and to a varied congregation by taking into consideration the various age and cultural differences that may exist.

**Agent of Change:** Change or transformation has never been successful without sacrifices. Sacrifices for change always come from the whole congregation, not a part, however, not all people embraces change at the onset. Rev. Sunday, as an agent of change, is able to impact lives with his messages, both within and without the walls of the church. He exhibits a very high spiritual discipline and this influences his behavior and relationship with people. He is an epitome of what the bible teaches in Ecclesiastes 4:9ff. People who are down have found encouragement from him. He uses sound biblical principles as a basis for counseling people. Rev. Sunday started Evangelism in the Soundview community and has challenge the Sound View PC congregation to take positive steps by going into the community for evangelism.

**Associate Minister:** Rev. Sunday, in his capacity as Associate Minister at the Sound View PC carried out the responsibilities associated with that position. He fills in each time the senior pastor is away. He is very receptive to supervision; he works very well

with his Pastor and as well with members of the church. He teaches the adult Sunday school and he's very consistent. His teaching has always impacted the church.

**Learner:** As a learner, Rev. Sunday has always demonstrated a readiness to ask for additional assistance and guidance on the completion of his work. He put in the necessary time and effort to improve his grasp of the material. He always showed great appreciation for any assistance offered. This humility also spilled over to his efforts as a potential author. When looking into the possible publication of a book he was writing, he contacted some of us for advice and solicited our honest feedback on his proposal. He also responds quickly and humbly to any feedback given. Retaining the attitude of one does "not count [himself] to have apprehended" is definitely beneficial not only to his completion of his demonstration project, but also integral to his ultimate "success" in ministry.

**Professional Skills:** It is the combination of these qualities mentioned above that make Rev. Sunday able and well fit for his doctoral program. Moreover, the choice of his demonstration project, "The Bronx Presbyterian Church (USA) Future Leaders Migrating: Creating a Process that Engages the Young Adults" shows his commitment to ministry. Rev. Sunday has continuously exhibited maturity and absolute confidence in spiritual things. He has a very strong passion for ministry; he is opened to ecumenism; his book, *Inspiration to Heaven: The Way to a Successful Journey*, aims at encouraging the unity of the universal church. At the Sound View PC, he has been recommending ideas for the growth of the church, especial concerning how to keep the youngsters in church, which also made the church voted him a member of the Session.

**Competencies Chosen for Development**



**1. Theologian:** As a theologian, I will focus my studies on biblical and theological reflections that are related and concern with young adults' theology, as it affects the church and the community which it serve. I will through spiritual formation also develop cultural diversity, which will enable the young adults to familiarize themselves with other cultures and youth from Africa and other places.

**Strategies:**

- A. I will use relevant literature; literatures that addresses issues concerning young adults'
- B. I will use sermons, Bible study lessons and Sunday schools lessons and pamphlets and other selected materials that are useful for the project
- C. I will always consult with my pastor, other pastors and leaders of youth ministries, and the Site Team for their assistance and advice in organizing the materials.
- D. I will also attend the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) national conferences and other non-PC conferences that are related to the issues of young adults'
- E. I will initiate a bridge between the young adults in the Sound View PC and other African churches, so that they can articulate their theological perspective and differences concerning their ministries and the future of the Sound View PC.

**Evaluation:**

- A. I will design a method of getting feedback from the pastors, young adults and leaders of the youth ministries. Feedback will help in anticipating the direction of the project; how to articulate the impact of the gathered theological information and how they will be relevant to the Sound View Presbyterian Church. I will also engage in feedback from authors and related books that respond to similar topics that have inspired literatures on young adults and that are also appropriate literature for the project.

B. I will also design a questionnaire that will be used to evaluate the level of parental, faith and peer pressure involvement in young adults life and how it affects them, and questions that will arise from young adults theological context. The questions will aim at knowing the probable reasons for their migration; whether it is as a result of their legal age of emancipation, tie to parental migration and peer pressures.

**II. Preacher:** As a Preacher, I will give sermons that are spiritually and theologically reflective of the challenge statement and sermons that concern the young adults. I will use my administrative skill in organization and persuasion to organize and coordinate the young adults into a more stable group, which will be involved in strategic aspect of the church matters.

**Strategies:**

A. I will prepare about three sermons that will be preached at the Sound View Presbyterian Church in November 2011.

B. I will also record three or more sermons that will be distributed to the Site Team members, leaders and Session of the Sound View Presbyterian Church, about five churches in the Bronx PCs, the office of the Presbytery located at the Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY, and the Evangelism and Church Development Resources Center.

**Evaluation:**

A. As feedback from the sermons, I will request evaluation from the Sound View PC pastors, leaders and youth leaders, the PC Presbytery office in Manhattan, Evangelism and Church Development Resources Center. The aim of the evaluation is to demonstrate that the sermons are reflective of the demonstration project, which centered on preventing

further migration of the young adults from the Bronx PCs, by involving and engaging them in the church activities. The evaluation will also demonstrate the responses of the participants which will include the importance of engaging young adults in the Sound View PC.

**III. Spiritual Leader:** As a spiritual leader, I will use the spiritual gift inventories and my spiritual gifts to identify, develop, and impact the congregation and the youth, in a way that will transform the congregation to a youth believing congregation. My spiritual development will help me in my spiritual leadership journey.

**Strategies:**

A. I will devote more time in teaching the youth, young adults, and the Sunday school about spiritual development and will use the Bible and other literatures that address such issues as my source.

B. I will also interview two or more clergies who have been committed to spiritual formation and are professionals in the field. I have Dr. Barbara Austin-Lucas, a Professor of Spiritual Formation at the Nyack College Alliance Theological Seminary in mind.

**Evaluation:**

A. In order to be well informed and receive accurate responses, I will request both oral and written feedback from participants.

B. I will encourage the young adults attending our Friday Night Youth Program to peruse the free online spiritual gift inventories; in order to measure the understanding of their gifts and to classify them in different groups based on the result of the spiritual gift inventories.

C. The feedback sessions will also enable me to liaise with the pastor in charge to create an avenue in the church service, whereby the young adults' or participants will be allowed to demonstrate their gifts.

D. I will consider the use of feedback from the interview in my personal spiritual growth and in turn, inspire the young adults to apply such in their personal spiritual growth and lifestyles.

**IV. Agent of Change:** As an agent of change, I will develop further my professional skills and gifts as a spiritual leader, a mentor, intercessor and a learner to impact the leaders and congregations in the Sound View PC., in order to evoke an awakening that will also inspire a spiritually transformed congregation.

**Strategies:**

A. I will use relevant literature and materials that focus on congregational changes and spiritual transformational and leadership.

B. I will strive to interview pastors and clergies that have been committed on the course of engaging the youth in their congregation. Pastor Brenda Berry of the University Height PC will be one of them.

**Evaluation:**

A. I will solicit feedback in written evaluation on congregational changes and how to create a healthy congregation, by using Steinke, P. L. *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*.

B. I will use information received from my interviews to personally develop my spiritual growth, which will help me in the demonstration project and lifestyle.

C. During the conferencing, I will use the feedback from participants and encourage the participants to identify their spiritual gifts, which will help them in working for the church.

D. In feedback sessions, participants will also be encouraged to identify the spiritual gifts that they are comfortable with and that they have been using in their areas of performances.

## APPENDIX A: TIMELINE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task/Activity</b>	<b>Tools to Complete Task</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
11/2011	Proposal Approval by Director		
1/2012	Meet with Advisor	Copy of Approved DP	SE
	Meet with Site Team	Teleconference	SE
	Monthly Report	Develop format	SE
	Monthly Report to Timekeeper	Report	SE
	Goal 1 Confirmation	Location; Attendees	SE
	Supplies		SE
	Goal 3 writing plans	Template	SE
	Goal 2 and 3 membership resources	Forms, etc.	SE
1/2012 – 3/2012	Goal 1 and 2	Focus Group 1, 2	SE with Site host
	Goal 1, 2 and 3	Readings	SE
	Goal 1, 2 and 3	Research	SE
	Writing	Competency Work Sheet	SE
	Goal 2 Timeline	Schedule; assessment	SE
	Monthly Report	Schedules	SE
4/2012	Confirm travel Plans	Research sites location; schedules; fees; etc.	SE
	Monthly Report to site team	Report	SE
	Review Input from site team	Feedback notes	SE
	Goal 1	Focus 2 and 3	SE/with host
	Meet with advisor	Notes; questions	
	Review status of writing for goal 2	Draft materials	SE; readers; timekeeper
5/2012	Goal 1	Focus Group theme coding	SE with site team
	Goal 2	Library/Research	SE
6/2012	Writing 1	Materials from focus group	SE
	Writing 2	Research/draft stories	SE
	Readers	Draft stories	SE
	Advisor	Notes; draft materials; questions	SE
	Site Team	Teleconference	SE
	Monthly Report	To Site Team	SE

7/2012	Travel/Research		SE
	Writing	Competencies	SE
	Research	Assessment	SE
	Meet with Timekeeper		SE
	Monthly Report		SE
8/2012	Goal 1	Draft final	SE
	Evaluation	Summations	SE
	Monthly Report		SE
	Site Team/Advisor	Determine location	SE/Site Team
8/2012	Goal 3	Draft to readers	SE
	Evaluation Summations	Paperwork from process assessment	SE
	Continue writing		SE
	Continue writing		SE
10/2012	Full DP Draft 1		SE; Site Team
	Review with site team; advisor		SE
11/2012	Re-write	Breathe!	SE
12/2012	Re-write	To Editor	SE
1/2013	Prelim. Submission		SE

## APPENDIX B: BUDGET

Date	Task/Activity	Tools to Complete Task	Cost/ Funding
2/2012	Proposal Approval by Director		
2/2012	Meet with Advisor	Copy of approval DP	
	Meet with Site Team	Teleconference	Donation
	Monthly report	Develop format	Donation
	Monthly report to timekeeper	Report	Donation
	Goal 1 Confirmation	Location; attendees	
	Supplies		SE; donation
	Goal 2 writing plan	Templates	
	Goal 2 memberships; resources; subscriptions	Forms, etc.	SE/\$300.00
3/2012	Goal 1	Focus group 1, 2	In-kind \$250.00
	Goal 1 and 2	Readings	In-kind
	Goal 1 and 2	Research	Library
	Writing	Competency work sheet	
	Goal 2 timeline	Schedule; assessment	
	Monthly report	Schedules	
4/2012	Confirm travel plans	Research site locations; schedules; fees, etc.	SE/donation
	Monthly Report to Site Team	Report	
	Review input from Site Team	Feedback notes	
	Goal 1	Focus group 2, 3	In-kind
	Meet with Advisor	Notes; questions	
	Review status of writing for Goal 2	Draft materials Photocopies	\$70.00
5/2012	Goal 1	Focus group	
	Goal	Library/research	
6/2012	Writing 1	Materials from focus groups	
	Writing 2	Research/draft chapters	
	Readers	Draft chapters	



	Advisor	Notes; draft materials; questions	
	Site Team		
	Monthly report		
7/2012	Travel		
	Writing	Revisions	
	Research	Assessment	
	Meet with Timekeeper		
	Monthly report		
8/2012	Goal 1	Draft final	
	Evaluation	Summations	
	Monthly report		
	Site Team/Advisor	Determine location	
9/2012	Goal 2	Draft readers	
	Evaluation summations	Paperwork from process assessment	
	Continued writing		
	Continued writing		
10/2012	Full DP Draft 1		
	Review with Site Team; Advisor		
11/2011	Re-write		
12/2012	Re-write	To editor	
1/2013	Prelim. Submission		

- Represents in-kind and/or donated includes items

### **Miscellaneous Items**

Office Supplies/postage	\$250.00
Printing/ Copier	\$250.00
Telephone	\$100.00
Software/technology upgrades	\$500.00
Travel/Meals, Lodging	\$300.00
Travel – local	\$150.00
Travel – out of state	\$700.00
Recordkeeping (standard)	\$150.00

Recordkeeping (archival)	\$150.00
Conferences & Flyers	\$700.00
Entertaining Site Team	\$200.00
<b>Total Estimated Budget</b>	<b>\$4000.00</b>

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APPENDIX B  
FLYER

## YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS *SPEAKOUT!*

*“EMBRACING THE FUTURE GENERATION OF YOUNG PRESBYTERIANS”*

1. WHY ARE YOUNG ADULTS LEAVING THE CHURCH?
2. WHAT ARE YOUR REASONS FOR NOT LEAVING THE CHURCH?
3. WHY DO YOU LIKE YOUR CHURCH?

### FEATURED SPEAKERS:

PASTOR CLEOTHA ROBERTSON (PH.D)  
PASTOR IN CHARGE SOUND VIEW PC (USA)  
ASSISTANT DEAN, FACULTY OF THE OLD  
TESTAMENT: NYACK COLLEGE ALLIANCE  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

REV. SONJA WEST (M.DIV)  
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT,  
NYACK COLLEGE: ALLIANCE THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY

PASTOR FRANCIS INOFOMOH (M. A.)  
THE BANNER OF GRACE CHURCH, BRONX

REV. SUNDAY ETSEKHUME (M.Div.)  
NYACK COLLEGE: ALLIANCE THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY AND DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDENT  
(DMIN), NEW YORK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BRO. KADEEM MARULAZ  
PRESIDENT, YOUTH MINISTRY  
SOUNDVIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**COORDINATORS:**  
ELDER MAYPHIL WHYTE  
DEACONESS BLESSING ETSEKHUME  
SISTER PATRICIA MASON HARRIGAN

### SAVE THE DATE



2 Saturdays  
July 21, 2012  
and  
August 18, 2012  
4:00 p.m.

#### LOCATION:

**SOUND VIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
760 SOUNDVIEW AVENUE, BX, NY 10473  
Phone: (718) 842-2287 or (917) 232-2956

For further information and directions please contact  
Rev. Sunday Etsekhume  
**COMPLIMENTARY DINNER WILL BE SERVED!**

**Appendix C  
INVITATION**

**You are cordially invited to attend a  
YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS SPEAK OUT**

*“Embracing the Future Generation of Young Presbyterians”*

**Seminar Dates:**

Saturday, July 21, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 18, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.

**Sound View Presbyterian Church**

**760 Soundview Avenue, Bronx, New York (Corner of Lafayette Avenue)**

**Featured Speakers:**

*Rev. Cleotha Robertson, Ph.D.*

*Rev. Sonja West, M. Div.*

*Pastor Francis Inofomoh, M.A.*

*Rev. Sunday Etsekhume, M. Div.*

*Bro. Kadeem Marulaz B. A.*

**Coordinators:**

*Elder Mayphil Whyte, Deaconess Blessing Etsekhume,*

*Sis. Patricia Harrigan*

Phone: 718-842 2287 Complimentary Dinner will be served

For further information contact: [setsekhume@aol.com](mailto:setsekhume@aol.com)

**Save the Date:**





**APPENDIX D**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SURVEY**

**YOUNG ADULT CHURCH ENGAGEMENT SERVICE**

**Please answer the following question as honestly as possible. If you would like to make additional comments, please feel free to use the back of these sheets.**

1. How old are you?  
☐ Older than 19 years old. If so, state your age \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ 18-19 years old  
☐ Less than 18 years old. If so, state your age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you currently attending church? ☐ Yes ☐ No (skip to Question 8)
3. If you answered yes, state the name of the church you attend  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you a member of the church?
  - If so, indicate how long you have been a member \_\_\_\_\_
  - If not, state how long you have attended the church \_\_\_\_\_
5. How frequently do you attend church?  
☐ Every Sunday  
☐ 2-3 Sundays a month  
☐ One Sunday a month  
☐ Only for major holidays (Christmas, Easter, New Year)  
☐ When there is an activity in which I'm interested  
☐ Other (please state reason \_\_\_\_\_)
6. Why do you come to church? (Check all that apply)  
☐ To worship God  
☐ To fellowship with others in the congregation  
☐ To see my peers  
☐ My parents attend the church  
☐ I am part of a ministry at the church  
☐ I am in leadership at the church  
☐ Other (please state reason \_\_\_\_\_)
7. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your church?  
☐ Very satisfied  
☐ Somewhat satisfied  
☐ Neutral/Not sure  
☐ Somewhat dissatisfied  
☐ Very dissatisfied
8. If you no longer attend church, check the reason(s) below.  
☐ There are no people my age in the church  
☐ There are no activities for people my age  
☐ The sermons, music, activities aren't relevant for my age

- ☐ The people are hypocritical
  - ☐ There is no respect for young people
  - ☐ I don't like the pastor
  - ☐ Other (please specify)
- 

9. What would it take for you to resume coming to church?
- ☐ Let young people take a more active part in some or all of the general worship service
  - ☐ Let young people plan and lead their own worship service
  - ☐ Allow young people to participate in church leadership
  - ☐ Invite young adult speakers or preachers who minister to young adults
  - ☐ Offer more ministries and/or activities that are appealing to young adults
  - ☐ Address issues that are of particular concern to young adults (college, work, relationships, etc.)
  - ☐ Other (please specify)
- 

10. What suggestions would you offer to improve the ministry to young people in your church?

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11. Please indicate your gender
- ☐ Male
  - ☐ Female
12. How would you classify your race?
- ☐ White
  - ☐ African-American/Black
  - ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native
  - ☐ Latino
  - ☐ Asian American
  - ☐ Pacific Islander
  - ☐ Multiracial
  - ☐ Other (please specify)
- 

- ☐ Prefer not to answer
13. What level of education have you completed?
- ☐ Elementary/Middle School
  - ☐ Some High School
  - ☐ High School Graduate/GED
  - ☐ Some college
  - ☐ Prefer not to answer

14. Are you currently employed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

15. If yes, check the answer that best describes your current level of employment.

(Please check all that apply)

☐ Full-time employee

☐ Part-time employee

☐ Freelance/temp employee

☐ Full-time student

☐ Part-time student

**APPENDIX E**  
**BRONX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) TEN YEAR TRENDS (1999-2009)**

#	NAME OF CHURCHES	TOTAL M/SHIP	TOTAL M/SHIP GAIN	TOTAL M/SHIP LOST	WORSHIP ATTENDANCE	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ENROLLMENT	CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS	CONTR'TION S PER PERSON
1	First of Throggs Neck PC (USA), E-Tremont Ave	44	2	2	20	2	\$15,000.00	\$340.00
2	Fourth PC (USA), Newbold Ave	72	3	3	38	24	\$85,217.00	\$1,183.00
3	Eastern Korean PC (USA), Newbold Ave	25	3	1	30	25	\$50,729.00	\$2,029.00
4	Laconia Community PC (USA), Laconia Ave	74	1	1	35	14	\$48,000.00	\$648.00
5	Bedford Park PC (USA), Bainbridge Ave	56	11	1	40	23	\$77,000.00	\$1,375.00
6	San Andres PC (USA), Sound View Ave	92	1	7	67	45	\$2,986.00	\$32.00
7	St. Augustine Church PC (USA), E 165 <sup>th</sup> Street	126	2	5	50	10	\$164,453	\$1,305.00
8	Fort Schuyler PC (USA), Dewey Ave	78	1	2	25	13	\$48,901.00	\$626.00
9	Sound View PC (USA), Sound View Ave	157	15	19	105	63	\$177,192	\$1,128.00
10	Tremont PC (USA), Grand Concourse	93	17	16	75	19	\$79,743.00	\$857.00
11	El Buen Pastor-Mid Bronx PC, Grand Concourse	30	4	1	50	24	\$56,088.00	\$1,869.00
12	University Heights PC USA, University Ave	83	6	2	60	19	\$162,496.00	\$1,957.00
13	Featherbed Lane PC (USA), Featherbed Lane	49	6	10	30	25	\$69,158.00	\$1,411.00
14	Riverdale PC (USA), Henry Hudson Pkwy	206	11	6	85	78	\$211,537.00	\$1,026.00
15	Beck	34	3	17	30	23	\$72,703.00	\$1,425.00

	Memorial PC (USA), E 180 Street							
16	First of Williams- Bridge PC (USA), E 225 Street	103	6	2	55	19	\$63,054.00	\$612.00
17	Eastchester PC (USA), Fish Ave	399	12	34	279	185	\$426,212.00	\$1,068.00
TOT AL		1,721	104	129	1,074	611	\$1,810,469.00	\$18,891.00

Comparative Statistics, annual editions 1999-2009, by Presbyterian Research Services.

**APPENDIX F**  
**NEW YORK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY INFORMED CONSENT**  
**FORM FOR FINAL DOCTORAL PROJECTS**

**Introduction:** I, Sunday Joseph I. Etsekhume, of 1110 Forest Ave, Bronx, NY 10456, Phone number 718-378-6939, Cell Phone: 917-232-2956 from the New York Theological Seminary, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 500, New York, New York 10115. I am a Doctor of Ministry Student (Dmin) and my faculty advisor to my project is Professor Wanda Lundy.

My research is on “The Bronx Presbyterian Churches Future Leaders Migrating: Creating a Process that Engage the Young Adults.”

**Purpose:** The purpose of my research is to find out why Young Adults are leaving the Bronx Presbyterian Churches.

**Procedure:** If you consent to participating in the study, you will be asked to participate in the following ways: be interviewed, participate in some kind of didactic or group study, retreat and be interview before, during, and after the study, etc. (Attached is a copy of the questionnaire)

I may also make an audiotape and videotape recording of the session, After the project is completed, I will destroy all audio and video tape

I am the Associate Pastor of Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA)

**Time required:** The project will begin on July 21, 2012 and conclude on August 18, 2012. You are being asked to commit to six hour of your time.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may still decline to participate in any of the session or answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You are completely free to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Risk:** There are no known risks associated with this study. In any human subject research involving self-disclosure, there is always the possible that you may feel discomfort or distress in the course of the research. If this happens, please inform me immediately.

**Benefits:** Although, there are no guaranteed benefits, it is possible that you may enjoy participating in this research and/or sharing your response to research question, or that will find the project personally or spiritually meaningful. This study is intended to benefit the Bronx Presbyterian Churches congregation by curtaining the future generation of leaders.

**Confidentiality/Anonymity:** Your name will be kept confidential in all of the reporting and/or writing related to this study. I, or lay advisory team member will

be the only persons present during the project research. I will be the only person who see/listens to any tape recording. When I write the final paper, I will pseudonym-made up name-for all participants, unless you specify in writing that you wish to be identified by name.

**Importance of Candor:** It is essential to this kind of research that all responses from participant be open, candid, forthright and honest.

**Sharing the Results:** Result of research may be share through class presentation, in written form, or in other ways. I anticipate that all results of this research will be share in the following ways:

**Publication:** There is the possibility that I may publish this study or refer to it in published writing in the future. In this event, I will continue to use pseudonyms and I may alter some identifying detail in order to further protect your anonymity.

**Before you sign:** By signing below, you are agreeing to participate in this project with the possibility of being audio-taped and videotaped and your words being written in a final paper. Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your full satisfaction before signing this document. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you. Separate copies will be kept in a sealed envelope in a locked file cabinet in the New York Theological Seminary Dean's office and by the researcher.

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent or guardian's signature (required for participants under the age of 18):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G

### FEEDBACK FORM FOR EVALUATION OF SITE TEAM

<i><b>Feedback Form</b></i>
<p>For the evaluation of the Site Team performance during Rev. Sunday J. I. Etsekhume Demonstration Project collectively as a team. Thank you for your participation. Your feedback is very precious to us, so that we can take in your suggestions and improve in those areas. Circle the appropriate answer. Thank you.</p> <p>Q.1 Site Team Overall Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• average</li> <li>• satisfactory</li> <li>• good</li> <li>• excellent *</li> </ul> <p>Q.2 Speakers Topic During the Seminar (7/21/12) and Conference (8/18/12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• average</li> <li>• satisfactory</li> <li>• good</li> <li>• excellent*</li> </ul> <p>Q.3 Speaker Articulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• average</li> <li>• satisfactory</li> <li>• good</li> <li>• excellent*</li> </ul> <p>Q.4 Conduct and Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• average</li> <li>• satisfactory</li> <li>• good</li> <li>• excellent*</li> </ul> <p>Q.5 Length of Time During the Demonstration Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• average</li> <li>• satisfactory</li> <li>• good</li> <li>• excellent*</li> </ul> <p>Q.6 Other Suggestions and Comments:</p> <p>More of such seminars to encourage the youths as this one was a tremendous success. Thank you very much for your valuable suggestions and comments. We appreciate your gracious gesture. Thank you once again!</p>



## APPENDIX H INTERVIEW

Interview of some Leaders of Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA)				
Questions	Chairperson Christian Education Committee	Superintendent of the Sunday School	The Coordinator of the Youth Ministry	Pastor
How long have you being a member of the Sound View Presbyterian Church?	Over 58 years	Over 40 years	Over 24 years	19 years
What is your position in the Church?	Elder	Elder	Elder	Pastor
From your experience, how many were the young adults (18 to 19 year old) in the church?	200	250	20	20
Do you understand that the young people are leaving Sound View Presbyterian Church?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
What do you see as the problem of the young adults leaving	They leave when they get into college, the church is a	The greatest attraction is outside the church and peer	To allow them to say their mind, leaders approach to	Peer Pressure

the church?	market place, it a general occurrence	pressure	them to be evaluated and to be flexible, do not have enough program	
How do we make the young stay in the church?	Pastor to encourage them, Evangelism, get in touch with parents and youngsters	Contact parents, respect for church official and parents, to adopt punctuality	Program and training to engage them	Games, fellowship, Movies
What kind of program do you recommend?	Leaders encouragement is needed, get in touch with young people, allow their opinion	Movies night, Pot Luck Supper, Board games	Train them for services, music and evangelism	
What is your advice to youngsters, educationally concerning Sunday school and theology?	To fight the world; Satan, to know their purpose on earth and God has a plan for them	Come to Sunday School; discuss the Bible and how it affects their life. "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverb 22:6)	Come to Sunday School to study the Bible, participate in evangelism, teach them how to grow in the faith and involve them in church services.	Come to church, Sunday school, Bible study, develop their spiritual gift

**APPENDIX I**  
**FEEDBACK FORM FOR SEMINAR AND CONFERENCE (YOUTH MINISTRY)**

<i>Feedback Form</i>
<p>For the evaluation of the Site Team performance during Rev. Sunday J. I. Etsekhume Demonstration Project collectively as a team. Thank you for your participation. Your feedback is very precious to us, so that we can take in your suggestions and improve in those areas. Circle the appropriate answer. Thank you.</p>
<p>Q.1 Site Team Overall Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• average</li><li>• satisfactory</li><li>• good</li><li>• excellent ***</li></ul>
<p>Q.2 Speakers Topic During the Seminar (7/21/12) and Conference (8/18/12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• average</li><li>• satisfactory</li><li>• good</li><li>• excellent ***</li></ul>
<p>Q.3 Speaker Articulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• average</li><li>• satisfactory</li><li>• good</li><li>• excellent ***</li></ul>
<p>Q.4 Conduct and Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• average</li><li>• satisfactory</li><li>• good</li><li>• excellent ***</li></ul>
<p>Q.5 Length of Time During the Demonstration Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• average</li><li>• satisfactory</li><li>• good</li><li>• excellent ***</li></ul>
<p>Q.6 Other Suggestions and Comments</p> <p>The site team did a marvelous job by supporting Rev. Sunday Etsekhume in his demonstration project. Sound View Presbyterian Church congregation asked for more of their involvement in the church.</p>
<hr/> <p>Thank you very much for your valuable suggestions and comments. We appreciate your gracious gesture. Thank you once again!</p>

## **APPENDIX J SURVEY RESULTS**

Survey done for the seminar on 7/21/12 and the conference on 8/18/12, indicating the numbers of young adults' in Sound View Presbyterian Church (USA).

### **Age Numbers**

13-15 = 3 = 10.34%

16-19 = 5 = 17.24%

20-25 = 6 = 20.69%

26-30 = 1 = 3.45%

31-40 = 2 = 6.90%

41-50 = 7 = 24.14%

51-60 = 4 = 13.79%

61-70 = 0 = 0%

71-80 = 1 = 3.45%

81-90 = 0 = 0%

Total = 29

Total numbers of SVPC Congregation = 173

29 of 173 in percentage = 16.76% took the survey

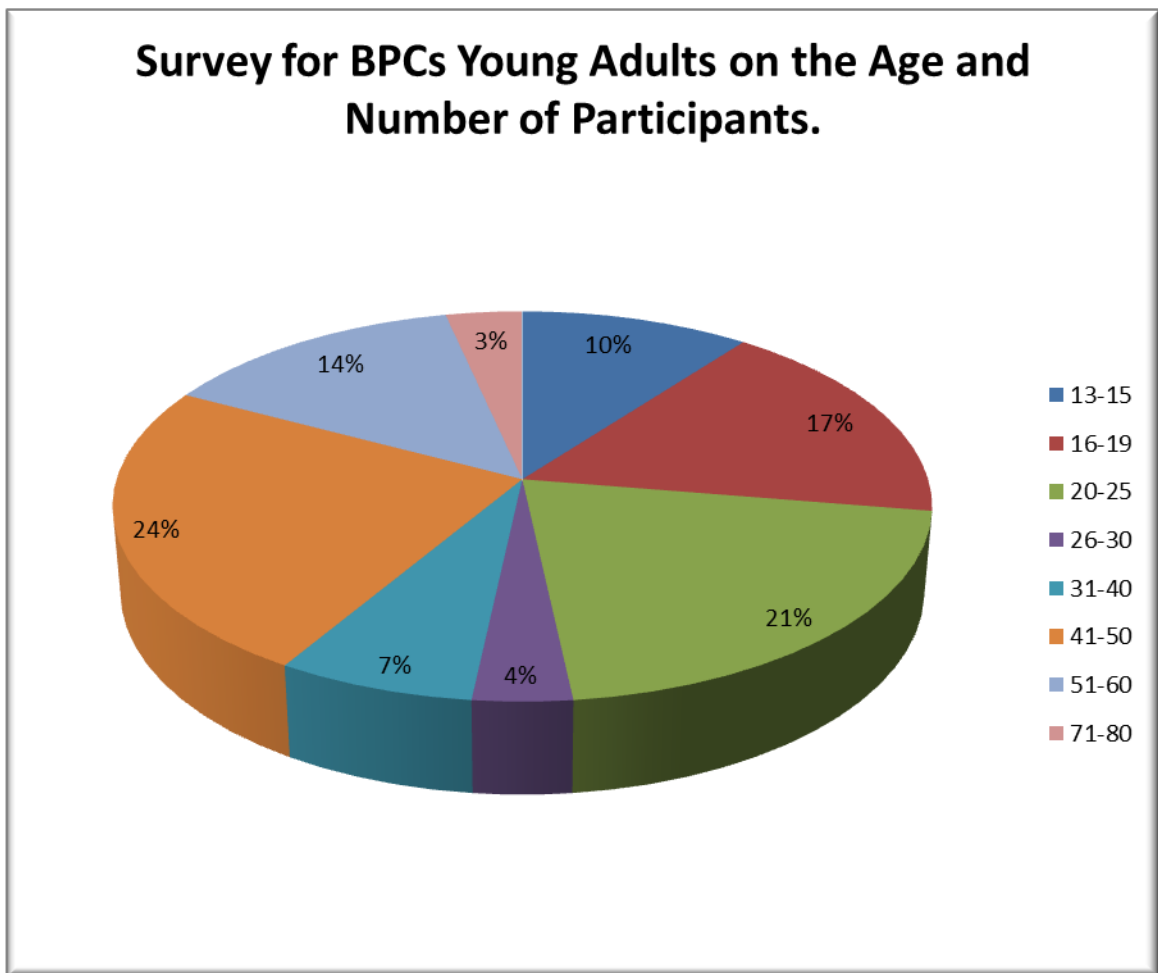
The numbers of those who participated in the survey was not up to 1/3 of the congregation.

The focus group was age 18-19 and attendance and those who took the survey was 10.34%, even though the survey ranges from 16-19. Ages 41-50 were 24.14% and 51-60 were 13.79% which also indicates that the young adults have migrated, while the future

of SVPC will continue to be pioneer by adults. Although, ages 20-25 was 20.69% which shows that some college students still come to church. What are the reasons for the decrease in the number of the focus group, age 18-19? So many reasons were given by the youngsters.

**APPENDIX K**  
**PIE CHART REPRESENTATION OF SURVEY**

Pie chart percentage representation



The color and percentage also indicates the categories of participants that have the highest numbers during the seminar and conference. Our focus groups, age 18-19 are under the age categories 16-19.

**APPENDIX L**  
**RESULT OF SURVEY USING QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**YOUNG ADULTS AGE 18-19**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Are you currently attending church?</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>How frequently do you attend church? Every Sunday</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Why do you come to church? To worship God and to fellowship</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>How would rate your overall satisfaction with your church?</b>	<b>Satisfied 3</b>	<b>Dissatisfied 1</b>	<b>Not sure 1</b>
<b>Question</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Are you no longer attending church</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

**APPENDIX M**  
**THEOLOGIAN FEEDBACK FORM (PASTOR)**

***Feedback Form***

For the evaluation of the Site Team performance during Rev. Sunday J. I. Etsekhume Demonstration Project collectively as a team. Thank you for your participation.

Your feedback is very precious to us, so that we can take in your suggestions and improve in those areas. Circle the appropriate answer. Thank you.

Q.1 Site Team Overall Performance

- average
- satisfactory
- good
- excellent

Q.2 Speakers Topic During the Seminar (7/21/12) and Conference (8/18/12)

- average
- satisfactory
- good
- excellent

Q.3 Speaker Articulation

- average
- satisfactory
- good
- excellent

Q.4 Conduct and Behavior

- average
- satisfactory
- good
- excellent

Q.5 Length of Time During the Demonstration Project

- average
- satisfactory
- good
- excellent

Q.6 Other Suggestions and Comments \_\_\_\_\_

The demonstration project was an excellent exercise \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your valuable suggestions and comments. We appreciate your gracious gesture. Thank you once again!



**APPENDIX N**  
**THE SERMON EVALUATION FORM**

**CHURCH: SOUND VIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SOUNDVIEW  
AVENUE, BRONX, NY ON SUNDAY, January 27, 2013**

**BIBLICAL**

Because God's Word lies at the center of all preaching, sermons should demonstrate that the Bible (and the specific portion of scripture on which the sermon was based) determined the main message of the sermon. What's more, if Scripture truly is God's revelation, then the sermon should reveal God's active presence (and above all his saving grace) in any given passage as well as throughout the whole of Scripture. With this in mind, please evaluate this particular sermon: Title: **Jesus Made an Open Invitation to Children**

**1=Excellent 2=Very Good 3=Good 4=Average 5=Poor**

- **The sermon content was derived from Scripture:**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **The sermon helped you understand the text better:**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **The sermon revealed how God is at work in the text:**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **The sermon displayed the grace of God in Scripture:**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

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**APPENDIX O**  
**REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANT AT THE JULY 21, 2012 SEMINAR**

**REGISTRATION**  
**SOUND VIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**760 Soundview Avenue, Bronx, NY 10473**  
**Speak Out! “Embracing the Future Generation of Young**  
**Presbyterians”**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ - 4:00 p.m.

ADDRESS	CHURCH/ADDRESS	EMAIL CONTACT/PHONE

**APPENDIX P**  
**REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANT AT THE CONFERENCE ON AUGUST 18,**  
**2012**

**REGISTRATION**

**SOUND VIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**760 Soundview Avenue, Bronx, NY 10473**

**Speak Out! “Embracing the Future Generation of Young Presbyterians”**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ - 4:00 p.m.

ADDRESS	CHURCH/ADDRESS	EMAIL CONTACT/PHONE

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